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A LEGEND OF ANOTHER WORLD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'A STRANGE TEMPTATION.'

INTRODUCTION.

AMONG the papers of the late distinguished astronomer and inventor, Dickinson Elliott Jones, there has been found one which bears on the outside a singular explanatory statement. It is well known that Mr. Elliott Jones professed, during the later years of his life, to have discovered a highly practicable method of visiting the planets, and even of reaching the nearer fixed stars. He referred to this knowledge when he desired to account for his mysterious periodical disappearances, which disappearances have never indeed received any satisfactory explanation. In the absence of positive proof, however, the possibility of his having taken journeys through space in a manner which—not to mention other difficulties—must have been inconceivably rapid, cannot for a moment be entertained. Mr. Elliott Jones always refused to give any hint of the details of his marvellous discovery. On this point, therefore, he must have been subject to some hallucination, although on other points his mind remained clear and subtle to the last. In the solution of difficult scientific problems his help was always welcome; on points of astronomical inquiry his opinion was invariably received with respect by his fellow-scientists. He even furnished us with

much information concerning the heavenly bodies—proved correct by subsequent experiment—which could not have been obtained originally by any known method of observation. How he procured this information he never revealed to us, and the secret is now unhappily lost by his death.

The one defect in his character or intelligence—we hardly know where to place it—this instinct of secrecy combined with a claim to extravagant personal power, interferes with the great value which would otherwise attach to all his written works. The document of which I now speak claims, by his notes upon it, to be the substance of a narrative related to him by a very extraordinary individual; a man who was an inhabitant of another world, and who, even in that world, was an exception and a mystery. He was reputed to be many generations old, and none of those with whom he lived knew anything of his origin. Of this old man, and the world in which he lived, and the people who inhabited it with him, Mr. Elliott Jones left a full and particular account, which it is not my purpose to offer here. It is sufficient to say that the old man who told his story had a reputation for great knowledge and a character of great benevolence. He was consulted by his countrymen—like our friend Mr. Jones—on all abstruse and difficult

questions; but, on the point of his personal history and individual power he was—again like our friend Mr. Jones—reputed to be somewhat mad. As the editor of the papers of the late Mr. Elliott Jones (for whom I had a very warm affection and admiration), it is not for me to pass any opinion upon the weight to be attached to the document which I now put before the public. I give it as I found it. It seems to me, however, that, whether it is regarded as the history of an actual, though apparently impossible, life, or only as the work of my friend's too ardent imagination, it may be accepted as a contribution (fragmentary, indeed, but not without suggestiveness) to that discussion on the value of life and the growth of creatures in the direction of happiness or misery, which has occupied so much of the attention of modern society. Without further preface, then, I offer the story as I found it among my friend's papers.

I.

Because I loved my fellows with a love which absorbed my whole heart, and because I had no desires for my own happiness, the great gift was granted to me of a term of life beyond that which was accorded unto others. Generations were born and died, nations rose and fell, and still I was left alive to work among the new races, and to help them with my knowledge. This gift was bestowed on me because it was not for myself that I desired it, perhaps because for myself I desired nothing; it may be that I hold it only on these conditions, but that indeed I cannot tell. From the days of my first youth a great love and a great compassion has had possession of me whenever I have looked upon the toiling multitudes around. I have seen them in their early ignorance struggling dumbly with physical troubles and wresting from nature a difficult and painful existence. I have watched them in their later luxury becoming the victims of indolence and melancholy, of a hundred diseases and

a thousand sins inherited with the wealth and the knowledge of their forefathers. If you ask me which state was the worse I cannot tell you; I only know that in the first there was a great hope, and in the last there is a deep despair.

It is many ages since the gift of a long life was bestowed on me; none can remember the granting of it; there is no record of it except in my own heart; and none will believe me when I speak of it. It was a great thing to have, a wonderful thing. Many had desired it before me, and had been forced to go, letting their unfinished task drop out of their hands. To me only was it said, "You have the ages to work in; an almost endless life is yours in which to toil for the benefit of your fellow men; your strength shall not fail while your love does not weary. The people may find in you a benefactor and a teacher who shall not be taken from them."

But the gift that was bestowed on me was too great for a man to endure. As the generations went by, the sum of all that I could do to serve them seemed small compared with the sum of their sorrows and their needs; for these seemed to grow with the ages, and could not be checked nor changed. Then I said in my heart at last, "There is no remedy, nor any hope; for every new life makes a new sorrow, and every new circumstance breeds a new pain. My help is only as a straw in the torrent of tribulation which roars onwards through the ages and will never be dried up." And in my despair I went away from the people to a great solitude where I could brood without interruption over the sorrows of the world, seeking always for some thought or some hope which might bring to it healing and help.

But no thought would come to me, nor any hope, save one: "It would be better for this suffering people that death should fall upon them swiftly, a painless death, overtaking them like a sleep from which

they may never awaken." Like a whisper came these words in answer to my thought: "This gift also is yours, because you have desired it unselfishly. Behold, it is in your hands to do even as you have said."

But I was afraid, and shrank back from the power which was offered to me; for I knew not, nor know I fully now, whether it was given as a reward of my great love, or a trial of my sincerity and constancy of purpose; or even as a punishment for my overweening ambition to stand against the tide of things and to protect my own people from the woes appointed to them to bear.

Instead of turning my hasty thought into an irremediable act, I went down once more among the people and—with that great power unused in my hands—I saw, as I had never seen before, the joy and the gladness of life. Babies clapped their hands in the sunlight, and children laughed gleefully at their play; lovers plighted their troth without fear or foreboding, and mothers led their boys proudly by the hand, showing them the world which they were to conquer; husbands, while they kissed their wives, thanked them for the love which made life beautiful; sisters and brothers rejoiced in the happiness of each other; and young girls looked out upon life with sweet expectant eyes, certain of praise and affection, and many good things to come. The painter gloried in his picture, the author loved his book. In every trade and every profession were men who delighted in their task and who put their best strength joyfully into it. Beyond all these joys, and common to all men, were other good things; the loveliness of the skies and of the world, of moving seas and growing trees and running waters; the beauty of music, of perfumes, of form, and of colour; the ecstasy of motion and the sweetness of rest; the pleasant cheerfulness of social intercourse and the peaceful influences of solitude; the satisfaction of originating a new

thought, and the joy of feasting on the thoughts of greater men; the pleasure of approbation and the happiness of worship. Beholding all these things, I said, "Is not life a good thing after all? How should I dare to take it from those who have not had their full portion?"

So I waited and put the gift by. But the old sadness returned, and I only lied to myself when I said that I was content; for always the sum of the evil was greater than the sum of the good, and if a few were happy many more were miserable. Not a single life was perfect; not a single joy went on to the end. The pleasure of one seemed to bring the trouble of another; for the balance of things was awry, and the weight lay heavy on the side of evil.

As I watched the people, and waited, and doubted (having still that power in my hands to use as I would), I saw that as they grew more unhappy they grew more wicked also; for the strong races are purified by suffering, but the weaker ones are corrupted; and the strength had gone from my people; only the obstinate instinct of life, the desperate determination to snatch enjoyment from the misery around, survived among them. Virtue had begun to go down in the struggle with vice, and generosity to retreat discouraged before the advance of selfishness. Men had no time to be kind, and no power to be good. The clear springs of the most innocent lives seemed to be polluted at their source; babies were born to sin as their fathers had sinned, and the fairest promise of youth carried secretly the germ of its own destruction. The moral disease which had taken root among the people spread upwards and downwards; it perverted to viciousness the simplest instincts of human nature, and transformed to selfishness the higher intellectual tendencies. Cruelty, sensuality, and the pride of mental power flourished together. Men ceased to keep faith with one another; they began to despise their mothers; most

of them had long neglected their wives. The strong ill-treated the weak, and the weak hated and lied to the strong. Treachery lurked in every corner: oppression ruled in the name of order, and cruelty abounded under the plea of necessity. If men were unkind to each other they were absolutely pitiless to the lower creatures in their power. Most of them had long ceased to worship or to follow after anything except their own satisfaction and glory, or—as some among them preferred to put it, loving noble names for ignoble things—the satisfaction and glory of their species. A few indeed kept up a fiction of belief in a creating power worthy of reverence, but this power was little more than a magnified ideal of their own desires. They did not boast that they were made in the image of God; rather did they make their God in the image of themselves. He was, as they represented Him, the base ally of the human race in its struggle with the other conscious creatures of His making. These other creatures He had abandoned—according to their showing—to the tender mercies of His unworthy favourite—man. Therefore many were ill-treated and tormented in the name of pleasure, or of health, or of science, nay, of humanity, and even of religion itself: for men had come to say that whatsoever they did for their own ultimate good, was good in itself, absolutely and always.

And still they waxed no happier. The suffering they inflicted seemed to recoil in manifold ways upon themselves, until at last I could endure the sight of it no more; for I thought, "If this people, whom I have loved and desired to help, continue in their evil ways, I shall learn to hate them at last, and all good things must hate them, and there will be no help for them anywhere. It is better that they should die."

Then, in one night, silently and without any warning, so that no one suffered fear or felt a single pang, I

did the thing that had been given to me to do; and the cities of the living became the cities of the dead. The people slept and awoke no more, and with them slept also all the other creatures of the world; and I was left alone.

The greatness of the act sustained me in its doing; but when it was over I was appalled by the solitude I had made, and by the strange great silence which followed, as if it had been lurking like a wild beast ready to seize upon the desolation. I went down to the lately populous places, and trod the streets where my footsteps echoed alone. I looked on the faces of the dead, but I did not repent, for all were at rest; and—for the first time for so many generations—I heard no sounds of weeping, nor saw any signs of woe. Yet I think I should have been glad if some little thing, some lower creature which could not suffer much from its prolonged consciousness, had escaped the general death, to be, as it were, a visible shadow of my own life in the unpeopled world. That life of mine, left single and unlike all the creation on which I looked, became immediately a monstrosity and a horror to me; it had reached beyond its proper term, and survived its natural use. How, then, could it continue to be?

The first few hours of my travel among the dead seemed indeed as long as a lifetime. A dreadful curiosity drove me through the silent cities; I wished to convince myself that all their inhabitants were of a certainty asleep for ever, that none had, by any chance, escaped. I was not hungry, nor thirsty; the need to eat or to drink would have seemed a mockery in the face of all these people whose wants were at an end for all time. My own soul seemed dead within me, and my life a vision and no reality.

Towards evening I came upon a house where there was a cradle, and a baby in it. I stood looking at the child idly for a moment, having seen many such sights that day; but there was

something in the appearance of this little baby which made my heart begin to beat suddenly and violently. Death could not terrify me; it was *life* that I looked upon with wonder and dismay. The child was breathing, slowly and faintly, more faintly every moment; but it was breathing still. A few hours more and its life would have ebbed away, the last wave left on the shore of time of all that great tide so full a little while ago. Should I leave it to die, or snatch it back to the existence it had scarcely tasted?—an existence it had never by any act of its own polluted or forfeited. The tender beauty of its face, the rounded softness of its limbs, touched me with a thrill of longing tenderness. Its little hands, rosy and dimpled, drew me towards them, helpless as they were, with a giant's strength.

I held my breath as I gazed upon it. I, who had desired and accomplished the annihilation of a race, could not leave this single little one alone to die. All my natural instincts fought for the child's life, yet I knew that my deeper reason had willed its death. My selfish desires for a companion of my solitude had dropped away from me; it was of the child alone that I thought as I watched it, afraid to move lest so I should decide its fate one way or another.

It did not occur to me that this might be a trial, or temptation, to prove the reality of my own belief in the necessity of what I had done; to test whether I had the strength to complete what I had begun. I did not think of this. I thought only of the child. And as I looked I forgot one by one the generations of the past; all the problems of life slipped from me; I had no memory of its troubles or its losses. I saw only a little child, a young creature whose helplessness appealed for help, and whose innocence demanded a cherishing love. I bent over it, and the warmth of my breath touched its cheeks; then it stretched its dimpled hands and uttered a tiny cry. Without any will of my

own, or so it seemed to me, for thought had left me, and instincts long forgotten had full possession of me, I put out my arms and lifted the child from its cradle.

II.

After that there was no question of leaving it to die. I took it away from the cities of the dead to the solitary mountains, where there was no remnant of anything that had had a conscious life. I nursed it back to strength; I fed it, and guarded it, and cherished it; for its life had become mine, and I had no thought of any other thing.

Those were, I think, the happiest days of any that I had lived. My great yearning to be a healer of trouble, a giver of love, was satisfied. In my arms I could hold all the life of the world, with my hands I could care for it, and guard it and caress it. In return I had—wonderful indeed to think of—all the love that the world contained for my very own: but this latter good was the smallest part of my joy; the greater blessing was my power to guard from trouble the life I had saved, so that none could interfere to work it any woe.

Sometimes, however, as I looked at the lovely child, when she had learned to speak to me, and to run about with agile feet, I wondered if sickness and old age must come also upon her as upon her forefathers. From these things I could not protect her, as I could from want and wrong. Her very life held its own elements of decay, and in her breast lurked those inherited instincts of generations which might some day demand more than I could give her—a more passionate love, a fuller life; and with these things the trouble that they bring.

As she grew older she proved very gentle and obedient. The sins of her fathers seemed to have left no rebellious inclinations, no morbid desires in her pure spirit. The life which we lived together seemed for a long time

to satisfy her completely. The reverential affection with which she regarded me was sufficient to occupy her whole heart.

I kept her away from the cities of the dead, from those vast remains of an ancient civilisation, which I myself nevertheless visited from time to time. We read books together; books chosen by myself, which had to do with the larger aspects of physical creation, and touched little on its human element. And yet, as she grew older and more thoughtful every day, I was aware that fancies were rising in her mind which it would be difficult to treat with wisdom. She gazed at me often, with a sort of wonder in her eyes. "It is strange, dear father," she said once, "that there should be only you and I, just two and no more. This is such a great world that we live in; it has room for so many others."

And again she observed to me, when she was growing tall and strangely fair to look upon—

"I change, dear father, as the time goes on. I remember when I could not look through the window of my little room; now I am tall enough to see much higher than that. I change, but you remain always the same. Why should this be? and will it go on for ever?"

"You are young," I answered, "and not yet completely grown. I came to my full size long ago."

"What is it to be young?" she asked; "and are there any other creatures that are young besides me? The things that we see around us do not alter, except backwards and forwards as the seasons come and go. But I change always one way, and you not at all."

These and other speculations working in her mind produced after a time a certain restlessness, and a blind desire to reach that wider knowledge of which she perceived dimly the indications in the world about her and in my teachings. I could not keep her ignorant for ever of her own nature, and of the history of her race: but I

could not bear to hasten by any revelation of my own the crisis which must come. I did not know what mood would follow a full understanding of her position; resignation to her lot, so peaceful, but so isolated; or bitter disappointment and indignation against me, as the author of her strange fate.

The crisis came, without any action of mine to hasten or retard it. One day, when I came back from a journey, I missed her from our home. She had often asked me why I went away and left her alone, and I had explained that it was needful for me to seek from time to time fresh stores of the things which we used; she was not strong enough, so I told her truthfully, to endure the fatigues of travel. She never asked where I found the things I brought to her, nor how they were made; she had a boundless confidence in my resources, in my knowledge and ingenuity; she was satisfied to accept what I offered her, and to use it as I directed her.

But now she was gone, and, whatever way her wandering footsteps took her, she could not fail to come upon some strange memorials of the past. She might indeed travel far before I could trace and overtake her; she might be overcome by hunger and fatigue. I felt certain that it would be in one of the great cities that I should find her, because she must inevitably chance upon some of the ancient roads before she had gone very far, and one of these she would follow to see what they meant and whither they led. It was inevitable that she should see things it would have been better for her never to look upon, and learn things which she had better not have known. The time of her happiest ignorance was gone for ever.

In a city of the dead I found her at last. I had travelled long through the silent streets and peered often into the silent houses. There was no one from whom I could ask any tidings of my lost darling; no one to tell me if her

delicate feet had trodden those solitary ways, or her sweet young eyes looked in upon the grim remains of death.

So many years had passed away, since the night of the great death, that the most terrible and dangerous effects of the universal mortality were at an end. The houses stood as when their inhabitants were alive, and there had been none to bury the dead; but at least these had lost all resemblance to their old forms in life, and so to any form that my darling had ever seen. I found her sitting in a luxurious room in a large house, leaning back in a carved chair, and looking with wonder and curiosity, but without any repugnance or terror, on the skeletons who were, besides herself, the sole inhabitants of the place.

"Dear father," she said, putting her hands out to me with a smile, and looking at me as if my discovery of her had nothing strange in it, "I am glad you have come. I am tired, and I have had so little to eat! Besides, I want you to tell me many things. What a strange place this is! and what strange carvings these are! But the most curious thing of all is that they should be dressed in clothes something like what I wear. Who made them like this? and did you know that they were here?"

I took her hands, and my own trembled so that she looked down on them in surprise.

"I knew of them," I answered; "but you must not stay where they are. It is bad for you to be here."

"I do not feel it so. I like it. It should like to stay. It seems as if some one had lived here who loved the things I love, and gathered them all about her. But there never was any one, was there?" she asked wistfully.

I spoke to her with more sternness than I had ever used before. "You must come away at once. If it had been good for you to be here I should have brought you myself. You ought to have known that."

She rose with a reluctant sigh, and followed me slowly, pausing half-way

across the room to look at an empty cradle.

"What a strange little bed!" she remarked, with interest; "something like mine, only so very small; as if I might have slept in it before I grew high enough to look through the window. Was it made for me? Was there ever another me before this one?"

Some fatality might have led her steps to that house and to that room, for she was looking at the very cradle from which I had taken her. I hurried her impatiently away, refusing to answer her questions. She looked at me in surprise from time to time, often with an air of awakened observation; something other than the old complete confidence in me and docile fidelity to my will was working in her heart. She was ceasing to be entirely receptive; soon she might become critical.

"How many homes!" she murmured, as she passed along the streets, "and no one to live in any of them! How did they all come here, gathered together in one place? Did they grow like trees in a forest?"

I did not attempt to answer all her questions, but I got her home again as soon as I could. Knowledge—a full knowledge of the life she had lost—could only bring to her sadness and discontent. Her present perplexity seemed better than that, and I was resolved to leave her in ignorance as long as it was possible. She could see that, for the first time in her life, I was seriously displeased with her; yet even this affected her less than it would have done in ordinary circumstances. When we reached our home, I spoke to her impressively.

"What is good for you to know I will tell you; what is good for you to see I will show you," I said, holding her hands in mine and looking steadfastly into her eyes. "Promise me that you will never again seek out new things alone."

To my astonishment she—who had hitherto been so obedient, tender, and sweetly acquiescent—drew her hands

from mine, covered her face with them, and broke out into passionate weeping.

"I cannot promise," she answered; "everything that I have I owe to you; without you I should be nothing at all. I wish to obey you; I will try to obey you; but there is something in my heart stronger than you are, and so I cannot promise."

That was all she would say to me; and from that time I knew that she cherished many thoughts and wishes of which she never spoke. I no longer possessed her full confidence. She understood that there existed powers beyond mine, and that, even of the power I had, I had not offered all the results to her. Yet she was tender to me, very tender and sweet, as if she wished to make up to me by grateful deeds for that reserve of force, of intention, of possible rebellion, in her heart.

One day she brought to me a book, not a book which I had given to her, but which she had found in her wanderings among the habitations of the past. She had been studying it in secret, and it was a love story.

"Do you know," she said, "who made this book, and what it means? It tells me of many things of which you have never spoken at all."

I could not lie to her, though truth must bring the bitterness of conscious loss, of unavailing desire. If she knew that I lied to her she would have none left to trust or to lean upon; she could not fail to become miserably aware of her own loneliness and helpless ignorance.

"It tells of things which it is better for you not to know," I answered. "They belong to the past, and can never be again."

"Ah!" she said, her eyes glowing with a strange light, "then it is all true! Others have lived like me, and have known each other, and have been happy together. They were not lonely as I am—oh, not for ever alone!"

"I am with you," I answered briefly.

"You!" she said, "you?" Then she paused and looked at me contemplatively. "You are not like me," she went on, with deliberation. "You are like the rocks and the trees and the soil and the light; always the same, always giving me help, never wanting anything back. But I—I change from day to day. Life is full of surprise to me, and of longing. I want some one like myself to be my companion, to talk with, as the men and women talk in that book. I always wondered why—since all other things were many—there should be but one man and one woman, you and I. You so old and changeless; I so young and full of change. I know now what it is to be young. It is to be unfinished—not as you are; to feel new every day—not as you do; to be incomplete, and to long for something outside myself; to feel the need of other lives to mix with mine; not to be satisfied to go on alone. That is what it is to be young, and I am young. But you—oh! you are very old. How did it come to be that we are alone together?"

"Because you are weak, and I am strong," I answered her; "because you need care, and I can give it."

"I would rather have lived when the other people were here," she replied; "then we could have helped one another. I understand now why all those homes stand empty. Once men and women lived there and—loved each other, and—were happy. I have learnt many beautiful things from that book. I wish you had taught them to me before. Tell me only this one thing—if the people were there once, why are they not there now?"

"They went away; they will never come again," I answered, for I could not speak to her of death. In the book that she had read the whole history of life was not recorded, only its bright beginning; and of death, towards which her life led her, towards which her bright, expectant face was turned in all unconsciousness, she knew nothing.

It was some weeks afterwards that I found her waiting for me near our home as I turned my steps thither for our evening meal. It was not strange to see her waiting so; but it was very strange, it was wonderful, that she was not alone. Destiny had found her, and had defeated me; for a kindred life had come to her from another world, and with life had come love, the love which explained life to her and completed it. There was no surprise in her eyes, for the things we have desired come to us as old companions and not as strangers; rather was there a look of radiant happiness and triumph.

Her companion was a stranger to me, however. He was not a creature of our world; he belonged to a race stronger and more beautiful than my own; yet he was not wholly unlike some of the young men I had known, not so unlike that he should not seem a fitting mate for the beautiful woman beside him. He appeared to have easily established communication with her; but to me he was silent, regarding me with a haughty curiosity as I approached them. She seemed already to belong to him; and she met me with a look of eager gladness, as if I must certainly rejoice in her happiness, and welcome the wonderful being who brought it.

"The book spoke the truth," she said. "There are others alive besides myself; others who are young as I am, and beautiful to look upon, and sweet to live with. And he—he has come from another world to find me."

I ought to have slain him as he stood there in the proud consciousness of his youth, splendour, and strength, with that serenity of aspect which was born of a perfect conviction of his own claims to satisfaction, and of his power to seize it; with that gracious courtesy of manner which partly hid his haughtiness and was the offspring of his simple selfishness of purpose. At his feet lay a strange garment, a dark-coloured wrap, hooded

and winged, the ingenious instrument of his transit from another world.

"I was afraid when I saw him first," said my darling, whose eyes had followed mine. "He was black and dreadful to look upon, and his face was hidden. But when he threw that veil away and stood before me, it—it was like a sun bursting from behind a hideous cloud."

She caught his hand as she spoke, with her white caressing fingers, and looked up into his shining eyes with a smile of love and confidence.

I ought to have slain him as he stood there. It would have been better for her, better for all things—for myself, last and least of all. He had no happiness to give which would not bring its trouble, though my darling, with her face towards the sun, could not see the shadow it cast behind her. I had no right to undo and destroy the great gift that had been granted to me; I had no right, for the sake of one simple girl, to let the beautiful world become once more the habitation of sorrow that grew, and sin that increased from day to day.

I ought to have slain him. It would have been easy. For my power was greater than his, in spite of that dazzling youthful splendour which he had about him. But I looked at my darling, and my hand was stayed. Once more, for the sake of one whose innocence appealed to me, I forgot the misery of a world. I could not bring horror to the eyes where gladness now shone; I could not turn the look of tenderness with which she gazed at him to one of hate for me. I could not teach her then and there what death was, and the meaning of sorrow and separation and despair. I turned and left them. As a criminal flies from the scene of his crime I fled from the sight of the happiness which had no right to be, longing only for that death to come to me which I had not the courage to give to another.

I did not die. I could not die. My punishment is to live. For a time my darling was happy; joyously and

laughingly at first, afterwards tenderly and quietly. Children came to her, and she loved them with a passion of delight, as if they were gifts that none other had had before—created for the employment of her tenderness alone.

Her husband was kind to her, in his splendid, lordly, condescending fashion; but he spoke to her little of the world from which he came, and for which he often left her. He told her that it was impossible to take her with him on these visits, and he probably had no desire to take her. His discovery of her youth and beauty in an apparently empty and abandoned world, on which he had by chance alighted, had been a pleasant surprise to him; he had taken full advantage of the circumstance, but he did not let it interfere in the least degree with his freedom of action. He left me to provide, as before, for the material wants of his wife, and of her children also. He told her, when she desired to go away with him, that she was sweetest and best as he had found her; that intercourse with others could only spoil, and must distress her. This satisfied her at first, for his passionate admiration of her beauty gave her keen delight; afterwards, when she had her children to think of, she no longer desired to go away.

As for me, when I found that I was needed, I took up my burden again and became her servant. I hoped for the best. Surely this new race, which had been cut loose from all the base traditions, habits, and examples of the past, might run a brighter and purer course than the last. The sweet fidelity and tenderness of the mother, the keen and cultivated intelligence of the father, must form a hopeful heritage for the boys and girls who were born to them. The temptations lurking in the old social conditions were swept away; degrading memories, bitter recollections, these things had no place in the good new world where my darling kissed her children and

told them to love one another. I hoped for the best, but the worst was to come.

Her first real trouble fell on her when one of her babies died. She could not be made to understand what had happened to it, for she had never heard of death. Her husband delighted in all her innocent ignorances and left them undisturbed. She thought me therefore strangely cruel when I wanted to take the dead child from her and to put it away under the ground. No, she said, she would wait any length of time and not grow tired of nursing it, even if it should never wake again. She loved it as it was, and would keep it with her. But her husband interfered with his authority, and she listened to him as she would not listen to me.

"It is necessary, entirely necessary, that you should let the dead child go."

"What do you mean by the *dead* child?" she asked; but he did not trouble to explain himself.

"You must obey those who know things of which you are ignorant," was all he vouchsafed to say to her on this point. "There are reasons of which you need not be told; but supposing that there were none, why should you waste your time, and your love, and your care, on a thing which can no longer feel, or see, or hear? which cannot have any consciousness of what you do for it? Have you not your husband to think of, and your other children? Do you suppose that I would permit such a waste of your energy and love? What is a dead baby, that never, even when it was alive, understood your affection for it?"

"It is my child—I am its mother," was all she could answer, out of her ignorance and blind maternal yearnings; but she used the words that she had received from my lips as if her own experience were enough to sanctify them, without that association with the love of generations of mothers which they carried to my ears. Her simple plea could avail her

nothing, however. Her baby was buried, and her husband made light of her trouble.

"What is one child more or less?" he would say to her. "Surely enough are left to you."

Perhaps she thought he was cruel; perhaps his words only perplexed her. She ceased to speak of the dead child; its memory lay silent in her heart, carefully covered from sight by living loves and daily efforts; but it was a sorrowful mystery to her, a broken chord in the musical instrument to which tenderness had tuned her life; no more such perfect harmony could be born for her again as she had listened to before.

As the years passed her husband's absences became longer and more frequent; but the care of her children occupied her at these times. She was one of those women who are too sweet to permit themselves to be unhappy while happiness is possible; because anything less than satisfaction with their lot would be a sort of complaint against those who love them. If she saddened, it was inwardly; and the outward signs of it were an increased tenderness and patience. Her children ceased to be entirely a joy to her, but she never expressed any of the grief which they must have caused her. They had inherited from the ancestors of whom she knew so little instincts and tendencies strange and repugnant to her pure and loving heart. The boys were quarrelsome and disrespectful, the girls frivolous and vain. They exhibited airs and graces such as their grandmothers had cultivated in the lost city life, which offended the simple sweetness of their mother. Their brothers struggled for pre-eminence and personal satisfaction in the vast solitudes which surrounded them, just as their forefathers had struggled in the crowded settlements of the past. Still my darling loved them, and smiled when they wounded her, and would not blame or utter any regret. Only she looked at me wonderingly,

sympathetically, sometimes almost remorsefully.

"I think sometimes, father," she said to me once, "that you knew of all these things beforehand, and wanted to save me from them. I think that perhaps there is more, very much more, that is plain to you, but that I do not know yet."

She was silent a moment, looking at me wistfully. "It must be sad to know," she went on slowly; "I wonder if you have known always. I do not want you to tell me. I would rather — wait." She ended with a little shudder, and turned to kiss her youngest child with a sudden passion that was born of sorrow and of fear. She had no desire to lift higher the dark veil which hid the possibilities of the future from her eyes.

There came a time when her husband went away, and did not return. Still she made no complaint, and asked no useless questions. This, she thought, was one of the hidden things of the future, against which there was no appeal. Her children became more troublesome and difficult to manage. They knew what fear was, but had no sense of reverence. They had feared their father and obeyed him, because his will was hard as iron against theirs, and as pitiless; in my devotion, unrewarded and undemanding, they saw only weakness. They were swift to learn lessons of evil; and as their father had treated me with a courtesy touched with contempt, so they behaved to me with a disobedience hardly modified by politeness. They despised their mother a good deal, and loved her a little (again imitating their father's sentiments with the proportions reversed); and thus it came to pass that they subdued none of their faults in her presence; and it was in the face of her own children that my darling learned to read the evil passions which had reigned in the unknown world of the past. Anger she saw, and jealousy; cowardice, ill-temper, cruelty, greed, and insolence. With a throb of terror in her heart she recog-

nised them for the evil things they were, the beginning of trouble to which there would be no end.

Her trial was not so long as it might have been. She missed, at least, the pangs of sickness and the weakness of old age. She did not live to see herself counted a burden where she had been a treasure, nor to receive ingratitude and slights in return for all her loving care. She never lost her health or her beauty; and the end that came to her, bitter as it was, was merciful, in that it was not long delayed. For her, at least, the curtain was never lifted to its height, and the depth of the darkness behind it was left unfathomed.

Her boys read books that she had never seen, for after the first she longed for no more. They knew things of which she was ignorant; the learning and history of the past were no secrets to them. They became ransackers of the ancient cities, and brought home strange spoils of weapons, and jewels, and carving, and ingenious instruments. One day two of them came upon a great store of daggers. Together they brought them home, and set to work to polish and sharpen them. Their mother looked on, and wondered what the strange knives were made for, but felt no fear. Over the division of the spoil, however, the brothers quarrelled.

"I am the elder," said one, "and the books say that to the elder goes the larger portion."

"But I am the stronger," said the other, "and I laugh at the books, and bid them come and get the knives from me if they can!"

Then in anger the two rushed together, and the mother, with a cry of terror, ran between. But their rage was increased by her interference.

"Leave us alone," said the elder; "I have read in the books that women ought not to interfere with the affairs of men. Go back to your own work, and leave us to fight it out."

"Put the knives down," she entreated; "they are sharp like those

with which the old father cuts wood for our fire. It is not good to play with them."

"We are not playing," answered the stronger. "These are made for men to fight with. The men of the past forged things like these with which to strike and slay one another when they were angry. We are men, too, and must do as they did."

"Strike? Slay?" she repeated, her face growing paler still at the ominous sound of those strange new words, coming, with a fierceness suggestive of their meaning, from the lips of her son. "You are speaking of something dreadful, something else that is waiting in the secret past to spring into our happy future. Let it go! Put them down!—ah, I can see it in your eyes!"

It was murder that she saw, and could not understand; but she held her two sons apart for one moment, while her panting breath refused to let her say more. The young men were stronger than she was, however, and they wasted no words upon her. By mutual consent they thrust her from between them, and rushed together again. The daggers gleamed in the air, but before they had time to fall, the mother, with a wild shriek of terror, had flung herself forward once more, with her slender hands trying to part the combatants.

And the daggers fell. Was it one wound or two beneath which she slipped to the ground, as water slips from a hollowed rock when the barrier is taken away? She had no strength left to struggle or to rise, but lay as she had fallen, her life flowing away in a warm current. The boys looked at her in wonder, and then at the red daggers in their hands. This thing they had not meant to do, and they uttered a loud cry of dismay, which brought me from afar.

I lifted my darling's head, and knew that there was no hope. She would die so, lying with her bright hair on my knee, and her eyes full of wonder and pain.

"My children, what have you done to me?" she asked pitifully. "What is this new thing that you have brought into our lives?"

I soothed her and comforted her, telling her that the pain would soon be over.

"But I grow weaker," she answered. "I am slipping away into the darkness. You seem farther off every moment."

"Rest will come soon," I told her; "and I will put you to sleep with your little one, where no trouble can reach you."

She smiled then, faintly and wanly.

"Is it true? Have you kept her for me? Put her in my arms and let us sleep together. Better the night and the darkness. I want no more daytime and knowledge. She only of them all never looked at me with something dreadful in her eyes. Let me go to my little one!" cried the poor mother, trying with a last effort of life to raise herself from my arms. "Why should I stay longer? My children do not love me, and my husband has forsaken me!" So with her dying words she uttered that secret of her sorrow which she had kept hidden in her heart before.

I buried her in her baby's grave, and with her I buried all hopes of a glad new world. With her children I could do nothing; they mocked at my teaching, and at last drove me from among them. The boys who had slain their mother, brooded over her loss at first, and reproached one another. After a time, however, the most calculating of the two put his grief away, and tried to make use of his experience.

"I know what death is now," he was heard to explain to a younger one; "it is a useful thing—a thing that takes people out of your way

when they want to interfere with you. But it must be used carefully, because it lasts for ever, and cannot be undone."

Since the day of my darling's death it has seemed to me that each generation has been worse than the one before it. The remnants of an old civilisation which the new race inherited proved a snare and a trouble only. The people hated to work with their hands, and loved to live on the labour of others. They were always plotting to do little and to have much. The keen intelligence handed down to them from their father helped them in this respect; they became the cleverest and the most self-indulgent of races. Some affections survived among them, but these were regarded as weaknesses, and as hindrances to true prosperity. The stronger of them oppressed the weaker, until at last there was a terrible outbreak, in which multitudes were slain: the survivors lived perpetually on their guard, as in an enemy's country, each seeking his own advantage and striving to circumvent his neighbour. After a time they became too idle even for warfare, and grew to be—what you see them now.

It is my punishment to live among them; to be despised by them; to be unable to render them any real help or service; while I am a constant witness of their wickedness and woe. Their sins seem to be mine, and their sorrows too; and I repent with a repentance which has no end. For I dared once to ask—in the arrogance of a great desire to help—that the fate of a whole race should be put in my hands. I dared, with my finite will, to meddle with issues that were infinite. How then can there be any end to my sorrow, since there is no end to the misery I have made?

THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

ABOUT ten years ago Mr. Bentley conferred no small favour upon lovers of English literature by reprinting, in compact form and good print, the works of Thomas Love Peacock, up to that time scattered and in some cases not easily obtainable. So far as the publisher was concerned nothing more could reasonably have been demanded; it is not easy to say quite so much of the editor, the late Sir Henry Cole. His editorial labours were indeed considerably lightened by assistance from other hands. Lord Houghton contributed a critical preface, which has the ease, point, and grasp of all his critical monographs. Miss Edith Nicolls, the novelist's granddaughter, supplied a short biography, written with much simplicity and excellent good taste. But as to editing in the proper sense—introduction, comment, illustration, explanation—there is next to none of it in the book. The principal thing, however, was to have Peacock's delightful work conveniently accessible, and that the issue of 1875 accomplished. The author, like Borrow, is an author by no means universally or even generally known; but this and a very curious robustness of prejudice are the only points of contact between him and the author of 'The Bible in Spain.' He has also been much more of a critic's favourite than Borrow. Almost the only dissenter, as far as I know, is Mrs. Oliphant, who has confessed herself in her book on the literary history of Peacock's time not merely unable to comprehend the admiration expressed by certain critics for 'Headlong Hall' and its fellows, but is even, if I do not mistake her, somewhat sceptical of the complete sincerity of that admiration. There is no need

to argue the point with this agreeable practitioner of Peacock's own art. A certain well-known passage of Thackeray, about ladies and Jonathan Wild, will sufficiently explain her own inability to taste Peacock's persiflage. As for the genuineness of the relish of those who can taste him there is no way that I know to convince sceptics. For my own part I can only say that, putting aside scattered readings of his work in earlier days, I think I have read the novels through on an average once a year ever since their combined appearance. Indeed, with Scott, Thackeray, Borrow and Christopher North, Peacock composes my own private Paradise of Dainty Devices, wherein I walk continually when I have need of rest and refreshment. This is a fact of no public importance, and is only mentioned as a kind of justification for recommending him to others.

Peacock was born at Weymouth on October the 18th, 1785. His father (who died a year or two after his birth) was a London merchant; his mother was the daughter of a naval officer. He seems during his childhood to have done very much what he pleased, though, as it happened, study always pleased him; and his gibes in later life at public schools and universities lose something of their point when it is remembered that he was at no university, at no school save a private one, and that he left even that private school when he was thirteen. He seems, however, to have been very well grounded there, and on leaving it he conducted his education and his life at his own pleasure for many years. He published poems before he was twenty, and he fell in love shortly after he was twenty-two. The course

of this love did not run smooth, and the lady, marrying some one else, died shortly afterwards. She lived in Peacock's memory till his death, sixty years later, which event is said to have been heralded (in accordance with not the least poetical of the many poetical superstitions of dreaming) by frequent visions of this shadowy love of the past. Probably to distract himself, Peacock, who had hitherto attempted no profession, accepted the rather unpromising post of under-secretary to Admiral Sir Home Popham on board ship. His mother, in her widowhood, and he himself had lived much with his sailor grandfather, and he was always fond of naval matters. But it is not surprising to find that his occupation, though he kept it for something like a year, was not to his taste. He gave it up in the spring of 1809, and returned to leisure, poetry and pedestrianism. The 'Genius of the Thames,' a sufficiently remarkable poem, was the result of the two latter fancies. A year later he went to Wales and met his future wife, Jane Griffith, though he did not marry her for ten years more. He returned frequently to the principality, and in 1812 made, at Nant Gwillt, the acquaintance of Shelley and his wife Harriet. This was the foundation of a well known friendship, which has furnished by far the most solid and trustworthy materials existing for the poet's biography. It was Wales, too, that furnished the scene of his first and far from worst novel 'Headlong Hall,' which was published in 1816. From 1815 to 1819 Peacock lived at Marlow, where his intercourse with Shelley was resumed, and where he produced not merely 'Headlong Hall' but 'Melincourt' (the most unequal, notwithstanding many charming sketches, of his works), the delightful 'Nightmare Abbey' (with a caricature, as genius caricatures, of Shelley for the hero), and the long and remarkable poem of 'Rhododaphne.'

During the whole of this long time,

that is to say up to his thirty-fourth year, with the exception of his year of secretaryship, Peacock had been his own master. He now, in 1819, owed curtailment of his liberty but considerable increase of fortune to a long disused practice on the part of the managers of public institutions, of which Sir Henry Taylor has given another interesting example. The directors of the East India Company offered him a clerkship because he was a clever novelist and a good Greek scholar. He retained his place ("a precious good place too," as Thackeray with good-humoured envy says of it in 'The Hoggarty Diamond') with due promotion for thirty-seven years, and retired from it in 1856 with a large pension. He had married Miss Griffith very shortly after his appointment; in 1822 'Maid Marian' appeared, and in 1823 Peacock took a cottage, which after a time became his chief and latterly his only residence, at Halliford, near his beloved river. For some years he published nothing, but 1829 and 1831 saw the production of perhaps his two best books, 'The Misfortunes of Elphin' and 'Crotchet Castle.' After 'Crotchet Castle' official duties and perhaps domestic troubles (for his wife was a helpless invalid) interrupted his literary work for more than twenty years, an almost unexampled break in the literary activity of a man so fond of letters. In 1852 he began to write again as a contributor to 'Fraser's Magazine.' It is rather unfortunate that no complete republication, nor even any complete list of these articles, has been made. The papers on Shelley and the charming story of 'Gryll Grange' were the chief of them. The author was a very old man when he wrote this, but he survived it six years, and died on the 23rd of January, 1866, having latterly lived very much alone. Indeed, after Shelley's death he never seems to have had any very intimate friend except Lord Broughton, with whose papers most of Peacock's correspondence is for the present locked up.

There is a passage in Shelley's 'Letter to Maria Gisborne' which has been often quoted before, but which must necessarily be quoted again whenever Peacock's life and literary character are discussed:—

"And there
Is English P——, with his mountain Fair
Turned into a flamingo, that shy bird
That gleams i' the Indian air. Have you not
heard

When a man marries, dies, or turns Hindoo,
His best friends hear no more of him? But
you

Will see him, and will like him too, I hope,
With his milk-white Snowdonian Antelope
Matched with his Camelopard. *His fine wit
Makes such a wound, the knife is lost in it;*
A strain too learned for a shallow age,
Too wise for selfish bigots; let his page
Which charms the chosen spirits of his time,
Fold itself up for a serene clime
Of years to come, and find its recompense
In that just expectation."

The enigmas in this passage (where it is undisputed that "English P——" is Peacock) have much exercised the commentators. That Miss Griffith, after her marriage, while still remaining a Snowdonian antelope, should also have been a flamingo, is odd enough; but this as well as the "camelopard" (probably turning on some private jest then intelligible enough to the persons concerned, but dark to others) is not particularly worth illuminating. The italicised words describing Peacock's wit are more legitimate subjects of discussion. They seem to me, though not perhaps literally explicable after the fashion of the duller kind of commentator, to contain both a very happy description of Peacock's peculiar humour, and a very sufficient explanation of the causes which, both then and since, made that humour palatable rather to the few than to the many. Not only is Peacock peculiarly liable to the charge of being "too clever," but he uses his cleverness in a way peculiarly bewildering to those who like to have "This is a horse" writ large under the presentation of the animal. His "rascally comparative" fancy, and the abundant stores of material with which his reading pro-

vided it, lead him perpetually to widen "the wound," till it is not surprising that "the knife" (the particular satirical or polemical point that he is urging) gets "lost in it." This weakness, if it be one, has in its different ways of operation all sorts of curious results. One is, that his personal portraits are perhaps further removed from faithful representations of the originals than the personal sketches of any other writer, even among the most deliberate misrepresenters. There is, indeed, a droll topsy-turvy resemblance to Shelley throughout the Scythrop of 'Nightmare Abbey,' but there Peacock was hardly using "the knife" at all. When he satirises persons he goes so far away from their real personalities that the libel ceases to be libellous. It is difficult to say whether Mr. Mystic, Mr. Flosky, or Mr. Skionar is least like Coleridge; and Southey, intensely sensitive as he was to criticism, need not have lost his equanimity over Mr. Feathernest. A single point suggested itself to Peacock, that point suggested another, and so on and so on, till he was miles away from the start. The inconsistency of his political views has been justly, if somewhat plaintively, reflected on by Lord Houghton in the words, "the intimate friends of Mr. Peacock may have understood his political sentiments, but it is extremely difficult to discover them from his works." I should, however, myself say that, though it may be extremely difficult to deduce any definite political sentiments from Peacock's works, it is very easy to see in them a general and not inconsistent political attitude—that of intolerance of the vulgar and the stupid. Stupidity and vulgarity not being (fortunately or unfortunately) monopolised by any political party, and being (no doubt unfortunately) often condescended to by both, it is not surprising to find Peacock—especially with his noble disregard of apparent consistency and the inveterate habit of pillar-to-post joking, which has been commented on—distributing his shafts

with great impartiality on Trojan and Greek; on the opponents of reform in his earlier manhood, and on the believers in progress during his later; on virtual representation and the telegraph; on barouche-driving as a gentleman's profession, and lecturing as a gentleman's profession. But this impartiality (or, if anybody prefers it, inconsistency) has naturally added to the difficulties of some readers with his works. It is time, however, to endeavour to give some idea of the gay variety of those works themselves.

Although there are few novelists who observe plot less than Peacock, there are few also who are more regular in the particular fashion in which they disdain plot. Peacock is in fiction what the dramatists of the school of Ben Jonson down to Shadwell are in comedy—he works in “humours.” It ought not to be, but perhaps is, necessary to remind the reader that this is by no means the same thing in essence, though accidentally it very often is the same, as being a humourist. The dealer in humours takes some fad or craze in his characters, some minor ruling passion, and makes his profit out of it. Generally (and almost always in Peacock's case) he takes if he can one or more of these humours as a central point, and lets the others play and revolve in a more or less eccentric fashion round it. In almost every book of Peacock's there is a host who has a more or less decided mania for collecting other maniacs round him. Harry Headlong, of Headlong Hall, Esquire, a young Welsh gentleman of means, and of generous though rather unchastened taste, finding, as Peacock says, in the earliest of his gibes at the universities, that there are no such things as men of taste and philosophy in Oxford, assembles a motley host in London, and asks them down to his place at Llanberis. The adventures of the visit (ending up with several weddings) form the scheme of the book, as indeed repetitions of something very little different form the scheme of all the other books, with the excep-

tion of ‘The Misfortunes of Elphin,’ and perhaps ‘Maid Marian.’ Of books so simple in one way, and so complex in others, it is impossible and unnecessary to give any detailed analysis. But each contains characteristics which contribute too much to the knowledge of Peacock's idiosyncrasy to pass altogether unnoticed. The contrasts in ‘Headlong Hall’ between the pessimist Mr. Escot, the optimist Mr. Foster, and the happy-mean man Mr. Jenkison (who inclines to both in turn, but on the whole rather to optimism), are much less amusing than the sketches of Welsh scenery and habits, the passages of arms with representatives of the Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews (which Peacock always hated), and the passing satire on “improving” craniology and other manias of the day. The book also contains the first and most unfriendly of the sketches of clergymen of the Church of England which Peacock gradually softened till, in Dr. Folliott and Dr. Opimian, his curses became blessings altogether. The Reverend Dr. Gaster is an ignoble brute, but not quite life-like enough to be really offensive. But the most charming part of the book by far (for its women are mere lay figures) is to be found in the convivial scenes. ‘Headlong Hall’ contains, besides other occasional verse of merit, two drinking songs—‘Hail to the Headlong,’ and the still better ‘A Heel-tap! a heel-tap! I never could bear it’—songs not quite so good as those in the subsequent books, but good enough to make any reader think with a gentle sigh of the departure of good fellowship from the earth. Undergraduates and Scotchmen (and even in their case the fashion is said to be dying) alone practise at the present day the full rites of Comus.

‘Melincourt,’ published, and indeed written, very soon after ‘Headlong Hall,’ is a much more ambitious attempt. It is some three times the length of its predecessor, and is, though not much longer than a single

volume of some three-volume novels, the longest book that Peacock ever wrote. It is also much more ambitiously planned; the twice attempted abduction of the heiress, Anthelia Melincourt, giving something like a regular plot, while the introduction of Sir Oran Haut-ton (an orang-outang whom the eccentric hero, Forester, has domesticated and intends to introduce to parliamentary life) can only be understood as aiming at a regular satire on the whole of human life, conceived in a milder spirit than 'Gulliver,' but belonging in some degree to the same class. Forester himself, a disciple of Rousseau, a fervent anti-slavery man who goes to the length of refusing his guests sugar, and an ideologist in many other ways, is also an ambitious sketch; and Peacock has introduced episodes after the fashion of eighteenth century fiction, besides a great number of satirical excursions dealing with his enemies of the Lakeschool, with paper money and with many other things and persons. The whole, as a whole, has a certain heaviness. The enthusiastic Forester is a little of a prig, and a little of a bore; his friend the professorial Mr. Fax prosed dreadfully; the Oran Haut-ton scenes, amusing enough of themselves, are overloaded (as is the whole book) with justificative selections from Buffon, Lord Monboddoo, and other authorities. The portraits of Southey, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Canning, and others, are neither like, nor in themselves very happy, and the heroine Anthelia is sufficiently uninteresting to make us extremely indifferent whether the virtuous Forester or the *roué* Lord Anophel Achthar gets her. On the other hand, detached passages are in the author's very best vein; and there is a truly delightful scene between Lord Anophel and his chaplain Grovelgrub, when the athletic Sir Oran has not only foiled their attempt on Anthelia, but has mast-headed them on the top of a rock perpendicular. But the gem of the book is the election for the borough

of One-Vote—a very amusing farce on the subject of rotten boroughs. Mr. Forester has bought one of the One-Vote seats for his friend, the Orang, and going to introduce him to the constituency falls in with the purchaser of the other seat, Mr. Sarcastic, who is a practical humourist of the most accomplished kind. The satirical arguments with which Sarcastic combats Forester's enthusiastic views of life and politics, the elaborate spectacle which he gets up on the day of nomination, and the free fight which follows are recounted with extraordinary spirit. Nor is the least of the attractions of the book an admirable drinking song, superior to either of those in 'Headlong Hall,' though perhaps better known to most people by certain Thackerayan reminiscences of it than in itself:—

"THE GHOSTS.

" In life three ghostly friars were we,
And now three friendly ghosts we be.
Around our shadowy table placed,
The spectral bowl before us floats:
With wine that none but ghosts can taste
We wash our unsubstantial throats.
Three merry ghosts—three merry ghosts—
three merry ghosts are we:
Let the ocean be port and we'll think it good sport

To be laid in that Red Sea.

" With songs that jovial spectres chaunt,
Our old refectory still we haunt.
The traveller hears our midnight mirth:
'Oh list,' he cries, 'the haunted choir!
The merriest ghost that walks the earth
Is now the ghost of a ghostly friar.'
Three merry ghosts—three merry ghosts—
three merry ghosts are we:
Let the ocean be port and we'll think it good sport

To be laid in that Red Sea."

In the preface to a new edition of 'Melincourt,' which Peacock wrote nearly thirty years later, and which contains a sort of promise of 'Gryll Grange,' there is no sign of any dissatisfaction on the author's part with the plan of the earlier book; but in his next, which came quickly, he changed that plan very decidedly.

'Nightmare Abbey' is the shortest, as 'Melincourt' is the longest, of his tales; and as 'Melincourt' is the most unequal and the most clogged with heavy matter, so 'Nightmare Abbey' contains the most unbroken tissue of farcical, though not in the least coarsely farcical, incidents and conversations. The misanthropic Scythrop (whose habit of Madeira-drinking has made some exceedingly literal people sure that he really could not be intended for the water-drinking Shelley); his still gloomier father, Mr. Glowry; his intricate entanglements with the lovely Marionetta and the still more beautiful Celinda; his fall between the two stools; his resolve to commit suicide; the solution of that awkward resolve—are all simply delightful. Extravagant as the thing is, its brevity and the throng of incidents and jokes prevent it from becoming in the least tedious. The pessimist-fatalist Mr. Toobad, with his "innumerable proofs of the temporary supremacy of the devil," and his catchword "the devil has come among us having great wrath," appears just enough, and not too much. The introduced sketch of Byron as Mr. Cypress would be the least happy thing of the piece if it did not give occasion for a capital serious burlesque of Byronic verse, the lines, "There is a fever of the spirit," which, as better known than most of Peacock's verse, need not be quoted. Mr. Flosky, a fresh caricature of Coleridge, is even less like the original than Mr. Mystic, but he is much more like a human being, and in himself is great fun. An approach to a more charitable view of the clergy is discoverable in the curate Mr. Larynx, who, if not extremely ghostly, is neither a sot nor a sloven. But the quarrels and reconciliations between Scythrop and Marionetta, his invincible inability to make up his mind, the mysterious advent of Marionetta's rival, and her abode in hidden chambers, the alternate sympathy and repulsion between Scythrop and those elder disciples of pessimism, his father and Mr. Toobad—all the

contradictions of Shelley's character, in short, with a suspicion of the incidents of his life brought into the most ludicrous relief, must always form the great charm of the book. A tolerably rapid reader may get through it in an hour or so, and there is hardly a more delightful hour's reading of anything like the same kind in the English language, either for the incidental strokes of wit and humour, or for the easy mastery with which the whole is hit off. It contains, moreover, another drinking-catch, "Seamen Three," which, though it is like its companion, better known than most of Peacock's songs, may perhaps find a place:—

"Seamen three! What men be ye?
Gotham's three wise men we be.
Whither in your bowl so free?
To rake the moon from out the sea.
The bowl goes trim, the moon doth shine,
And our ballast is old wine;
And you ballast is old wine.

"Who art thou so fast adrift
I am he they call Old Care.
Here on board we will thee lift.
No: I may not enter there.
Wherefore so? 'Tis Jove's decree
In a bowl Care may not be;
In a bowl Care may not be.

"Fear ye not the waves that roll!
No: in charmed bowl we swim.
What the charm that floats the bowl?
Water may not pass the brim.
The bowl goes trim, the moon doth shine
And our ballast is old wine;
And your ballast is old wine."

A third song sung by Marionetta, "Why are thy looks so blank, Grey Friar?" is as good in another way; nor should it be forgotten that the said Marionetta, who has been thought to have some features of the luckless Harriet Shelley, is Peacock's first life-like study of a girl, and one of his pleasantest.

The book which came out four years after, 'Maid Marian,' has, I believe, been much the most popular and the best known of Peacock's short romances. It owed this popularity, in great part, no doubt, to the fact that the author has altered little in the well-

known and delightful old story, and has not added very much to its facts, contenting himself with illustrating the whole in his own satirical fashion. But there is also no doubt that the dramatisation of 'Maid Marian' by Planché and Bishop as an operetta, helped, if it did not make, its fame. The snatches of song through the novel are more frequent than in any other of the books, so that Mr. Planché must have had but little trouble with it. Some of these snatches are among Peacock's best verse, such as the famous "Bramble Song," the great hit of the operetta, the equally well-known 'Oh, bold Robin Hood,' and the charming snatch:—

"For the tender beech and the sapling oak,
That grow by the shadowy rill,
You may cut down both at a single stroke,
You may cut down which you will ;

"But this you must know, that as long as
they grow,
Whatever change may be,
You never can teach either oak or beech
To be aught but a greenwood tree."

This snatch, which, in its mixture of sentiment, truth, and what may be excusably called "rollick," is very characteristic of its author, and is put in the mouth of Brother Michael, practically the hero of the piece, and the happiest of the various workings up of Friar Tuck, despite his considerable indebtedness to a certain older friar, whom we must not call "of the funnels." That Peacock was a Pantagruelist to the heart's core is evident in all his work ; but his following of Master Francis is nowhere clearer than in 'Maid Marian,' and it no doubt helps us to understand why those who cannot relish Rabelais should look askance at Peacock. For the rest no book of Peacock's requires so little comment as this charming pastoral, which was probably little less in Thackeray's mind than 'Ivanhoe' itself when he wrote 'Rebecca and Rowena.' The author draws in (it would be hardly fair to say drags in) some of his stock satire at courts, the clergy, the landed

gentry, and so forth ; but the very nature of the subject excludes the somewhat tedious digressions which mar 'Melincourt,' and which once or twice menace, though they never actually succeed in spoiling, the unbroken fun of 'Nightmare Abbey.'

'The Misfortunes of Elphin,' which followed after an interval of seven years, is, I believe, the least generally popular of Peacock's works, though (not at all for that reason) it happens to be my own favourite. The most curious instance of this general unpopularity is the entire omission, as far as I am aware, of any reference to it in any of the popular guide-books to Wales. One piece of verse, indeed, the "War-song of Dinas Vawr," a triumph of easy verse and covert sarcasm, has had some vogue, but the rest is only known to Peacockians. The abundance of Welsh lore which, at any rate in appearance, it contains, may have had something to do with this ; though the translations or adaptations, whether faithful or not, are the best literary renderings of Welsh known to me. Something also, and probably more, is due to the saturation of the whole from beginning to end with Peacock's driest humour. Not only is the account of the sapping and destruction of the embankment of Gwaelod an open and continuous satire on the opposition to Reform, but the whole book is written in the spirit and manner of 'Candide'—a spirit and manner which Englishmen have generally been readier to relish, when they relish them at all, in another language than in their own. The respectable domestic virtues of Elphin and his wife Angharad, the blameless loves of Taliesin and the Princess Melanghel, hardly serve even as a foil to the satiric treatment of the other characters. The careless incompetence of the poetical King Gwythno, the coarser vices of other Welsh princes, the marital toleration or blindness of Arthur, the cynical frankness of the robber King Melvas, above all, the drunkenness of the immortal

Seithenyn, give the humourist themes which he caresses with inexhaustible affection, but in a manner no doubt very puzzling, if not shocking, to matter-of-fact readers. Seithenyn, the drunken prince and dyke-warden, whose carelessness lets in the inundation, is by far Peacock's most original creation (for Scythrop, as has been said, is rather a humorous distortion of the actual than a creation). His complete self-satisfaction, his utter fearlessness of consequences, his ready adaptation to whatever part, be it prince or butler, presents itself to him, and above all, the splendid topsy-turviness of his fashion of argument make Seithenyn one of the happiest, if not one of the greatest, results of whimsical imagination and study of human nature. "They have not"—says the somewhat prince, now King Melvas' butler, when Taliesin discovers him twenty years after his supposed death—"they have not made it [his death] known to me for the best of all reasons, that one can only know the truth. For if that which we think we know is not truth, it is something which we do not know. A man cannot know his own death. For while he knows anything he is alive; at least, I never heard of a dead man who knew anything, or pretended to know anything: if he had so pretended I should have told him to his face that he was no dead man." How nobly consistent is this with his other argument in the days of his principedom and his neglect of the embankment! Elphin has just reproached him with the proverb, "Wine speaks in the silence of reason." "I am very sorry," said Seithenyn, "that you see things in a wrong light. But we will not quarrel, for three reasons: first, because you are the son of the king, and may do and say what you please without any one having a right to be displeased; second, because I never quarrel with a guest, even if he grows riotous in his cups; third, because

there is nothing to quarrel about. And perhaps that is the best reason of the three; or rather the first is the best, because you are the son of the king; and the third is the second, that is the second best, because there is nothing to quarrel about; and the second is nothing to the purpose, because, though guests will grow riotous in their cups in spite of my good orderly example, God forbid that I should say that is the case with you. And I completely agree in the truth of your remark that reason speaks in the silence of wine."

'Crotchet Castle,' the last but one of the series, which was published two years after 'Elphin' and nearly thirty before 'Gryll Grange,' has been already called the best; and the statement is not inconsistent with the description already given of 'Nightmare Abbey' and of 'Elphin.' For 'Nightmare Abbey' is chiefly farce, and 'The Misfortunes of Elphin' is chiefly sardonic persiflage. 'Crotchet Castle' is comedy of a high and varied kind. Peacock has returned in it to the machinery of a country house with its visitors, each of whom is more or less of a crotcheteer; and has thrown in a little romantic interest in the suit of a certain unmoneyed Captain Fitzchrome to a noble damsel who is expected to marry money, as well as in the desertion and subsequent rescue of Susannah Touchandgo, daughter of a levanting financier. The charm of the book, however, which distinguishes it from all its predecessors, is the introduction of characters neither ridiculous nor simply good in the persons of the Rev. Dr. Folliott and Lady Clarinda Bossnowl, Fitzchrome's beloved. "Lady Clarinda," says the captain, when the said Lady Clarinda has been playing off a certain not unladylike practical joke on him, "is a very pleasant young lady;" and most assuredly she is, a young lady (in the nineteenth century and in prose) of the tribe of Beatrice, if not even of Rosalind. As for Dr. Folliott, the

author is said to have described him as his amends for his earlier clerical sketches, and the amends are ample. A stout Tory, a fellow of infinite jest, a lover of good living, an inveterate paradoxer, a pitiless exposé of current cant and fallacies, and, lastly, a tall man of his hands, Dr. Folliott is always delightful, whether he is knocking down thieves, or annihilating, in a rather Johnsonian manner, the economist, Mr. McQuedy, and the journalist, Mr. Eavesdrop, or laying down the law as to the composition of breakfast and supper, or using strong language as to "the learned friend" (Brougham), or bringing out, partly by opposition and partly by irony, the follies of the transcendentalists, the fops, the doctrinaires, and the mediavalists of the party. The book, moreover, contains the last and not the least of Peacock's admirable drinking songs:—

"If I drink water while this doth last,
May I never again drink wine;
For how can a man, in his life of a span,
Do anything better than dine?
We'll dine and drink, and say if we think
That anything better can be;
And when we have dined, wish all mankind
May dine as well as we.

"And though a good wish will fill no dish,
And brim no cup with sack,
Yet thoughts will spring as the glasses ring
To illume our studious track.
O'er the brilliant dreams of our hopeful
schemes
The light of the flask shall shine;
And we'll sit till day, but we'll find the way
To drench the world with wine."

The song is good in itself, but it is even more interesting as being the last product of Peacock's Anacreontic vein. Almost a generation passed before the appearance of his next and last novel, and though there is plenty of good eating and drinking in 'Gryll Grange,' the old fine rapture had disappeared in society meanwhile, and Peacock obediently took note of the disappearance. It is considered, I believe, a mark of barbarian tastes to lament the change. But I am not

certain that the Age of Apollinaris and lectures has yet produced anything that can vie as literature with the products of the ages of Wine and Song.

'Gryll Grange' however, in no way deserves the name of a dry stick. It is, next to 'Melinecourt,' the longest of Peacock's novels, and it is entirely free from the drawbacks of the forty-years-old book. Mr. Falconer, the hero, who lives in a tower alone with seven lovely and discreet foster-sisters, has some resemblances to Mr. Forester, but he is much less of a prig. The life and the conversation bear, instead of the marks of a young man's writing, the marks of the writing of one who has seen the manners and cities of many other men, and the personages throughout are singularly lifelike. The loves of the second hero and heroine, Lord Curryfin and Miss Niphet, are much more interesting than their names would suggest. And the most loquacious person of the book, the Rev. Dr. Opimian, if he is somewhat less racy than Dr. Folliott, is not less agreeable. One main charm of the novel lies in its vigorous criticism of modern society in phases which have not yet passed away. "Progress" is attacked with curious ardour; and the battle between literature and science, which nowadays even Mr. Matthew Arnold wages but as one *cauponans bellum*, is fought with a vigour that is a joy to see. It would be rather interesting to know whether Peacock, in planning the central incident of the play (an "Aristophanic comedy," satirising modern ways), was aware of the existence of Mansel's delightful parody of the 'Clouds.' But 'Phrontisterion' has never been widely known out of Oxford, and the bearing of Peacock's own performance is rather social than political. Not the least noteworthy thing in the book is the practical apology which is made in it to Scotchmen and political economists (two classes whom Peacock had earlier

persecuted in the personage of Mr. McBorrowdale, a candid friend of Liberalism, who is extremely refreshing; and besides the Aristophanic comedy, 'Gryll Grange' contains some of Peacock's most delightful verse, notably the really exquisite stanzas on "Love and Age."

The book is the more valuable because of the material it supplies in this and other places for rebutting the charges that Peacock was a mere Epicurean, or a mere carper. Independently of the verses just named, and the hardly less perfect "Death of Philemon," the prose conversation shows how delicately and with how much feeling he could think on those points of life where satire and jollification are out of place. For the purely modern man, indeed, it might be well to begin the reading of Peacock with 'Gryll Grange,' in order that he may not be set out of harmony with his author by the robust but less familiar tones, as well as by the rawer though not less vigorous workmanship of 'Headlong Hall' and its immediate successors. The happy mean between the heart on the sleeve and the absence of heart has scarcely been better shown than in this latest novel.

I have no space here to go through the miscellaneous work which completes Peacock's literary baggage. His regular poems, all early, are very much better than the work of many men who have won a place among British poets. His criticism, though not great in amount, is good; and he is especially happy in the kind of miscellaneous trifle (such as his trilingual poem on a whitebait dinner), which is generally thought appropriate to "university wits." But the characteristics of these miscellanies are not very different from the characteristics of his prose fiction, and, for purposes of discussion, may be included with them.

Lord Houghton has defined and explained Peacock's literary idiosyncrasy

as that of a man of the eighteenth century belated and strayed in the nineteenth. It is always easy to improve on a given pattern, but I certainly think that this definition of Lord Houghton's (which, it should be said, is not given in his own words) needs a little improvement. For the differences which strike us in Peacock—the easy joviality, the satirical view of life, the contempt of formulas and of science—though they certainly distinguish many chief literary men of the eighteenth century from most chief literary men of the nineteenth, are not specially characteristic of the eighteenth century itself. They are found in the seventeenth, in the Renaissance, in classical antiquity—wherever, in short, the art of letters and the art of life have had comparatively free play. The chief differentia of Peacock is a differentia common among men of letters; that is to say, among men of letters who are accustomed to society, who take no sacerdotal or "singing-robe" view of literature, who appreciate the distinction which literary cultivation gives them over the "herd of mankind," but who by no means take that distinction too seriously. Aristophanes, Horace, Lucian, Rabelais, Montaigne, Saint Evremond, these are all Peacock's literary ancestors, each, of course, with his own difference in especial and in addition. Aristophanes was more of a politician and a patriot, Lucian more of a freethinker, Horace more of a simple *pocourant*. Rabelais may have had a little inclination to science itself (he would soon have found it out if he had lived a little later), Montaigne may have been more of a pure egotist, Saint Evremond more of a man of society, and of the verse and prose of society. But they all had the same *ethos*, the same love of letters as letters, the same contempt of mere progress as progress, the same relish for the simpler and more human pleasures, the same good fellowship, the same tendency to

escape from the labyrinth of life's riddles by what has been called the humour-gate, the same irreconcilable hatred of stupidity and vulgarity and cant. The eighteenth century has, no doubt, had its claim to be regarded as the special flourishing time of this mental state urged by many others besides Lord Houghton; but I doubt whether the claim can be sustained, at any rate to the detriment of other times, and the men of other times. That century took itself too seriously—a fault fatal to the claim at once. Indeed, the truth is that while this attitude has in some periods been very rare, it cannot be said to be the peculiar, still less the universal, characteristic of any period. It is a personal not a periodic distinction; and there are persons who might make out a fair claim to it even in the depths of the Middle Ages or of the nineteenth century.

However this may be, Peacock certainly held the theory of those who take life easily, who do not love anything very much except old books, old wine, and a few other things, not all of which perhaps need be old, who are rather inclined to see the folly of it than the pity of it, and who have an invincible tendency, if they tilt at anything at all, to tilt at the prevailing cants and arrogances of the time. These cants and arrogances of course vary. The position occupied by monkery at one time may be occupied by physical science at another; and a belief in graven images may supply in the third century the target, which is supplied by a belief in the supreme wisdom of majorities in the nineteenth. But the general principles—the cult of the muses and the graces for their own sake, and the practice of satiric archery at the follies of the day—appear in all the elect of this particular election, and they certainly appear in Peacock. The results no doubt are distasteful, not to say shocking, to some excellent people. It is impossible to avoid a slight chuckle when one

thinks of the horror with which some such people must read Peacock's calm statement, repeated I think more than once, that one of his most perfect heroes "found, as he had often found before, that the more his mind was troubled the more madeira he could drink without disordering his head." I have no doubt that the United Kingdom Alliance, if it knew this dreadful sentence (but probably the study of the United Kingdom Alliance is not much in Peacock), would like to burn all the copies of 'Gryll Grange' by the hands of Mr. Berry, and make the reprinting of it a misdemeanour, if not a felony. But it is not necessary to follow Sir Wilfrid Lawson, or to be a believer in education, or in telegraphs, or in majorities, in order to feel the repulsion which some people evidently feel for the Peacockian treatment. With one sense absent and another strongly present it is impossible for any one to like him. The present sense is that which has been rather grandiosely called the sense of moral responsibility in literature. The absent sense is that sixth, seventh, or eighth sense, called a sense of humour, and about this there is no arguing. Those who have it, instead of being quietly and humbly thankful, are perhaps a little too apt to celebrate their joy in the face of the afflicted ones who have it not; the afflicted ones, who have it not, only follow a general law in protesting that the sense of humour is a very worthless thing, if not a complete humbug. But there are others of whom it would be absurd to say that they have no sense of humour, and yet who cannot place themselves at the Peacockian point of view, or at the point of view of those who like Peacock. His humour is not their humour; his wit not their wit. Like one of his own characters (who did not show his usual wisdom in the remark), they "must take pleasure in the thing represented before they can take pleasure in the representation." And in the things that Peacock

represents they do not take pleasure. That gentlemen should drink a great deal of burgundy and sing songs during the process appears to them at the best childish, at the worst horribly wrong. The prince-butler Seithenyn is a reprobate old man, who was unfaithful to his trust and shamelessly given to sensual indulgence. Dr. Folliott, as a parish priest, should not have drunk so much wine; and it would have been much more satisfactory to hear more of Dr. Opimian's sermons and district visiting and less of his dinners with Squire Gryll and Mr. Falconer. Peacock's irony on social and political arrangements is all sterile, all destructive, and the sentiment that "most opinions that have anything to be said for them are about two thousand years old" is a libel on mankind. They feel, in short, for Peacock the animosity mingled with contempt which the late M. Amiel felt for "clever mockers."

It is probably useless to argue with any such. It might, indeed, be urged in all seriousness that the Peacockian attitude is not in the least identical with the Mephistophelian; that it is based simply on the very sober and arguable ground that human nature is always very much the same, liable to the same delusions and the same weaknesses; and that the oldest things are likely to be best, not for any intrinsic or mystical virtue of antiquity, but because they have had most time to be found out in, and have not been found out. It may further be argued, as it has often been argued before, that the use of ridicule as a general criterion can do no harm, and may do much good. If the thing ridiculed be of God, it will stand; if it be not, the sooner it is laughed off the face of the earth the better. But there is probably little good in urging all this. Just as a lover of the greatest of Greek dramatists must recognise at once that it would be perfectly useless to attempt to argue Lord Coleridge out of the idea that Aristophanes,

though a genius, was vulgar and base of soul, so to go a good deal lower in the scale of years, and somewhat lower in the scale of genius, everybody who rejoices in the author of 'Aristophanes in London' must see that he has no chance of converting Mrs. Oliphant, or any other person who does not like Peacock. The middle term is not present, the disputants do not in fact use the same language. The only thing to do is to recommend this particular pleasure to those who are capable of being pleased by it, of whom there are beyond doubt a great number to whom it is pleasure yet untried.

It is well to go about enjoying it with a certain caution. The reader must not expect always to agree with Peacock, who not only did not always agree with himself, but was also a man of almost ludicrously strong prejudices. He hated paper money; whereas the only feeling that most of us have on that subject is that we have not always as much of it as we should like. He hated Scotchmen, and there are many of his readers who without any claim to Scotch blood, but knowing the place and the people, will say,

"That better wine and better men
We shall not meet in May,"

or for the matter of that in any other month. Partly because he hated Scotchmen, and partly because in his earlier days Sir Walter was a pillar of Toryism, he hated Scott, and has been guilty not merely of an absurd and no doubt partly humorous comparison of the Waverley novels to pantomimes, but of more definite criticisms which will bear the test of examination as badly. His strictures on a famous verse of 'The Dream of Fair Women' are indefensible, though there is perhaps more to be said for the accompanying jibe at Sir John Millais's endeavour to carry out the description of Cleopatra in black (chiefly black) and white. The reader of Peacock

must never mind his author trampling on his, the reader's, favourite corns; or rather he must lay his account with the agreeable certainty that Peacock will shortly afterwards trample on other corns which are not at all his favourites. For my part I am quite willing to accept these conditions. And I do not find that my admiration for Coleridge, or my sympathy with those who opposed the first Reform Bill, or my inclination to dispute the fact that Oxford is only a place of "unused libraries and unread books," make me like Peacock one whit the less. It is the law of the game, and those who play the game must put up with its laws. And it must be remembered that at any rate in his later and best books Peacock never wholly "took a side." He has always provided some personage or other who reduces all the whimsies and prejudices of his characters, even including his own, under a kind of dry light. Such is Lady Clarinda, who regards all the crotcheteers of Crotchet Castle with the same benevolent amusement; such Mr. McBorrowdale, who, when he is requested to settle the question of the superiority or inferiority of Greek harmony and perspective to modern, replies, "I think ye may just buz that bottle before you." (Alas! to think that if a man used the word "buz" nowadays some wiseacre would accuse him of vulgarity or of false English.) The general criticism in his work is always sane and vigorous, even though there may be flaws in the particular censures; and it is very seldom that even in his utterances of most flagrant prejudice anything really illiberal can be found. He had read much too widely and with too much discrimination for that. His reading had been corrected by too much of the cheerful give-and-take of social discussion, his dry light was softened and coloured by too frequent rainbows, the Apollonian rays being reflected on Bacchic dew. Anything that might otherwise seem hard and

harsh in Peacock's perpetual ridicule is softened and mellowed by this pervading good fellowship which, as it is never pushed to the somewhat extravagant limits of Wilson, so it distinguishes Peacock himself from the authors to whom in pure style he is most akin and to whom Lord Houghton has already compared him—the French tale-tellers from Anthony Hamilton to Voltaire. In these, perfect as their form often is, there is constantly a slight want of geniality, a perpetual clatter and glitter of intellectual rapier and dagger which sometimes becomes rather irritating and teasing to ear and eye. Even the objects of Peacock's severest sarcasm, his Galls and Vamps and Eavesdrops, are allowed to join in the choruses and the bumpers of his easy going symposia. The sole nexus is not cash payment but something much more agreeable, and it is allowed that even Mr. Mystic had "some super-excellent madeira." Yet how far the wine is from getting above the wit in these merry books is not likely to escape even the most unsympathetic reader. The mark may be selected recklessly or unjustly, but the arrows always fly straight to it.

Peacock, in short, has eminently that quality of literature which may be called recreation. It may be that he is not extraordinarily instructive, though there is a good deal of quaint and not despicable erudition wrapped up in his apparently careless pages. It may be that he does not prove much; that he has, in fact, very little concern to prove anything. But in one of the only two modes of refreshment and distraction possible in literature, he is a very great master. The first of these modes is that of creation—that in which the writer spirits his readers away into some scene and manner of life quite different from that with which they are ordinarily conversant. With this Peacock, even in his professed poetical work, has not very much to do; and in his novels, even in

'Maid Marian,' he hardly attempts it. The other is the mode of satirical presentment of well-known and familiar things, and this is all his own. Even his remotest subjects are near enough to be in a manner familiar, and 'Gryll Grange,' with a few insignificant changes of names and current follies, might have been written yesterday. He is, therefore, not likely for a long time to lose the freshness and point which, at any rate for the ordinary

reader, are required in satirical handlings of ordinary life; while his purely literary merits, his grasp of the perennial follies and characters of humanity, of the *ludicrum humani generis* which never varies much in substance under its ever-varying dress, are such as to assure him life even after the immediate peculiarities which he satirised have become, or have even ceased to be history.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

THE MUSICAL AND THE PICTURESQUE ELEMENTS IN POETRY.

THE view of art that is expressed by the phrase "imitation of nature" has left traces in nearly all criticism—in criticism of literature, as much as in criticism of art in the more restricted sense. One example of the influence of this definition is the stress that is often laid on "the imagination" as the principal faculty at work in poetry. For when in poetical criticism imagination rather than passion is regarded as the essential thing, the reason seems to be that the imagination, being visual, keeps itself in contact with external nature, while passion, or feeling, remains merely internal. Imitation of nature is thought to give a certain superiority to the kinds of art in which it has a greater place, as making them somehow less purely personal, more disinterested. Some such view as this seems to be implied in parts of the article on "Poetic Imagination," by Mr. Arthur Tilley, in the January number of this Magazine.

It is not sufficient for those who disagree with this view to point to the indefinable personal quality present in all poetical work, and indeed in all art, whether specifically personal or impersonal in its attitude towards nature and man. Those who have a preference for the objective, imitative, element in art, would admit the presence of this personal quality just as much as any one else. And they could defend their position in this way. Taking this quality—which, they might point out, is exactly the element that eludes analysis—as "a constant," as something always present in anything that can be called poetry, they might insist that an impartially objective view of the world is that which characterises the highest poetry; and that poets are to

be placed higher or lower according to the degree in which they succeed in being objective and impartial. This objective character, they might say, is best described as a character of "the poetic imagination."

To this it may be replied that insight into the reality of things is not precisely imagination any more than it is passion; that this insight is rather a part of the meaning conveyed by poetry than an element of its form, and has just as much relation to one formal quality as to another. In fact, we have got away from what ought to be a distinction between formal elements to a distinction of content from form. But the first question for criticism is, in which of the formal elements that can be detected by analysis does the indefinable, unanalysable quality of poetry most of all express itself.

Imagination, as a name for one of the formal elements in poetry, is too wide. It always suggests more than the power of constructing and picturing shapes of external things; and it has sometimes been used to describe the formative power generally, the power of giving shape to the feelings within, as well as to the images of the world without. On the other hand, passion refers properly to the material or basis of poetry, and not to its form at all.

There is, however, another current distinction of poetical criticism—that of "musical" and "picturesque" qualities—by which the difficulties of clearly distinguishing passion and imagination are avoided. Both these terms refer entirely to form; and they divide between them all the formal qualities of poetical work. For the term "picturesque," though strictly it ought only to be applied to those

characters of the imagery of a poem that recall the effects of a picture, has come to be applied in practice to the whole of the qualities that depend on visual imagination. The explanation of this extension of meaning is that, just as the imaginative characters of ancient poetry are most related to the effects of sculpture, so the imaginative characters of modern poetry are most related to the effects of painting. With the extension that has been given to it, the term "picturesque" describes half the formal qualities of a poem. The other term of the antithesis, which is again a purely formal one, and therefore to be preferred to "passionate," describes the other half of all the formal qualities of poetry; for musical quality and the element of passion are names for the same thing (considered artistically). Rhythmical movement is the expression of emotional movement; and in poetry the material of passion, or feeling, assumes metrical, that is, "musical" form. Thus the antithesis of "musical" and "picturesque" is at once clear and perfectly general.

Are the two elements distinguished by these terms of equal value? Or is one of them the essential poetic quality, and the other a subordinate element to be taken into account by criticism in an estimate of the total artistic value of poetical work, but not directly affecting its value merely as poetry?

Closer consideration of the two terms will make it clear that the essential element in poetry is that which is described by the first of them when properly interpreted. The true interpretation of both may be arrived at by developing the consequences of Lessing's theory of the limits of poetry and painting.

Lessing proved in the 'Laocoon' that the method of the poet must be different from that of the painter (or of the sculptor); that the poet cannot imitate the painter in his treatment of subjects they have in common, and that the painter cannot imitate the

poet. He shows by examples what difference of treatment actually exists, and deduces it from the necessary conditions of the arts of expression in words and in colours. There is this difference of treatment, because in poetry images are represented in their relations in time, while in painting objects are represented in their relations in space. In detailed descriptions of beautiful objects the poet cannot equal the painter; but he is not confined, like the painter, to a single moment of time. The poet describes the effects of things, not merely the things themselves; and thus he can convey ideas of beautiful objects by methods of his own which the painter cannot employ. But to produce a "poetic picture," that is, a picture not of an object but of an action or event, which consists of successive phases related in time, not of coexistent parts related in space, is the true aim of the poet.

Now Lessing's conception of a poetic picture—a picture in words of a series of images related in time—is not a perfectly simple conception. We may discover in it by analysis those suggestions of distinct pictures which, as Lessing admits, are made incidentally by the poet without attempting anything beyond the limits of his own art. The words of the poet call up images of what existed at those particular moments which the painter might select if he were working on the same subject. Is it, then, the mere relation of these images in time, or is it some remaining thing, that makes the picture poetic? That it is some remaining thing, and that this is the "musical element," will become clear from an example. We will select one from Milton—

"Down a while

He sat and round about him saw unseen.
At last, as from a cloud, his fulgent head
And shape star-bright appeared or brighter, clad
With what permissive glory since his fall
Was left him or false glitter."

This passage is a perfect example of a "poetic picture" in Lessing's sense;

and there is no difficulty here in detecting the presence of the two elements. The poetic effect does not proceed merely from the vivid objective representation of the phases of an action or event as they follow one another in time. A particular image out of the series—that which is contained in the italicised lines—rises before the imagination. The movement in which the mind is really absorbed is not the external movement, but the musical movement of the verse; and on the stream of this musical movement there is the single image appearing. But since Milton is especially a musical poet, we will also take an example from a picturesque and objective poet; let us take Homer's description of the march of the Grecian army:—

“ ἥλτε πῦρ αἰθέριον ἐπιφλέγει, ἄσπετον ὕλην
οὐρεὺς ἐν κορυφῇ, ἔκαθεν δέ τε φαίνεται αὐγὴ,
ὡς τῶν ἐρχομένων ἀπὸ χαλκοῦ θεσπεσίῳ
αἰγλή παμφάνοσα δι' αἰθέρος οὐρανὸν ἵκεν.”¹

Do we not here perceive as separate images, first, the blaze of the forest, and then the gleam that is compared with it, of the armour? We are at the same time conscious of the march of the army; but this movement is, as it were, identified with the rhythmical movement of the verse. Here, as before, a particular image rather than the whole objective movement is realised in imagination. To this realisation of definite pictures is added the rhythmical movement, in other words, the musical element, of the verse. This alone is the element in poetry that has time for its condition; and time, not space, is, as we have seen, the fundamental condition of poetic representations. Of the two formal elements of poetic effects, therefore—musical movement and separate suggestions of picturesque imagery—it is clear that the first, since that

alone depends on the fundamental condition of poetic representations, must be regarded as the essential element.

Thus, by considering the nature of the formal conditions of poetic expression, we find that the effects which recall those of painting (and sculpture) are subordinate to the musical element. But in order to meet a possible objection, it is necessary to point out that the effects of music itself and of poetry are not, as is implied in some criticisms, identical. Sometimes the remark is made about verse that possesses musical quality in a very high degree that it “almost succeeds in producing the effect of music.” Such criticisms convey the idea that the effort after intensity of musical effect in verse is an attempt to pass beyond the limits of verbal expression, and therefore that it does not properly belong to poetry. But the musical effect of verse is of its own kind, and is produced by methods peculiar to the poet. The resemblance that there is between musical verse and music is due to resemblance in the general conditions of their production; music, like poetry, has time for its formal condition, and in music as in poetry the effect depends immediately on sequences of sound; but there need not be any imitation either on the part of the poet or of the musician. This becomes evident from the observation that many people who are very susceptible to music care little for metrical effects in poetry; while on the other hand those who care most for lyric poetry have often no peculiar susceptibility to music.

For those who can accept provisionally the conclusion that the musical element is the essential element in poetry, an examination of the characteristics of the poets in whose work musical quality becomes most manifest, as a quality distinct from all others, will not be without interest. In the first place it may be asked, is there any mode of dealing with life and with external nature that is

¹ “Like as destroying fire kindles some vast forest on a mountain's peak, and the blaze is seen from afar; so, as they marched, the dazzling gleam of their awful armour reached through the sky even unto the heavens.”—Il. ii. 455-8.

characteristic of those poets who display this quality pre-eminently! Admitting that all material is of equal value to the artist, we may still find that some particular mode of treatment of that which is the material of all art is spontaneously adopted by poets who manifest the essential poetic quality both in its highest degree and in such a manner that it is perceived to be distinct from all others.

Artistic qualities generally become most distinct, most separable in thought from other qualities, in lyric poetry. If, then, there should be any discoverable relation between mode of treatment of material and mode of manifestation of poetic quality, this will be found most easily by studying the work of poets whose genius is of the lyric order. It is even possible that such a relation may exist in lyric poetry only. We may see reason for concluding that a certain mode of treatment of life is characteristic of the greatest lyric poets, but this conclusion may have no further application.

The general condition of the manifestation of lyrical power may be found without much difficulty. This condition is expressed in the remark so frequently made that lyric poetry is "subjective." As it is used in criticism the term is sometimes rather vague; but it really describes very well the change that all actual experience undergoes in becoming material for lyric poetry. The lyric poet resolves all human emotion and all external nature into their elements, and creates new worlds out of these elements. Now this process has a certain resemblance to the resolution of things into their elements by philosophical analysis. The method of the poet of course does not end in analysis; but that resolution of emotion into a few typical poetic motives, and of nature into ideas of elementary forces and forms, which is the first condition of the creation of the new poetic world of the lyrist, resembles the analytical process of the philoso-

pher taken by itself in that it is subjective. The term has therefore not been misapplied in this case in being transferred from philosophy to literary criticism.

The subjective character of lyric poetry is so obvious that it has been noticed as a fact even by those who have not seen the reason that determines it. The reason why the lyric poet must be "subjective" is this: in order to produce a distinct impression by the form of his work, he must have the material perfectly under his control. Now the material cannot be under the control of the poet unless he selects from that which he finds in life, accentuating some features of experience, and suppressing others. To make this selection possible analysis is necessary; and then, the more complete the transformation of human emotion with all its circumstances into a new "subjective" world, the more complete is also the detachment of form from matter, the more intense is the impression given by the form alone.

This transformation may be brought about in two different ways. One of these consists in contemplating from the point of view of a peculiar personality the few typical emotions and ideas to which analysis reduces all the rest. A new world is created in which some effect of strangeness is given to everything. After the treatment of earlier artists has been studied, an effort is made to express what has been left by them incompletely expressed—all those remoter effects of things which they have only suggested. Baudelaire, who has carried this method to its limits, has also given the theory of it. He called it the research for "the artificial," and regarded it as the typical method of modern art. The other method is to give to the mood that is selected as the motive of a poem a special imaginative character by associating with it some typical episode of life, colouring this brilliantly, and isolating it from a background that is vaguely

thought of as made up of commonplace experience. This mode of treatment of life is to a certain extent that of all poets; but some lyrist—Heine, for example—have carried it to greater perfection as a poetic method than the rest. Lyrics such as Heine's have for their distinctive character an intensity of emotional expression which has led some critics to praise them as not being "artificial." But they are really quite as artificial, in a sense, as those with which they are contrasted. For nothing in them is taken directly from life. The episode that is selected has a certain typical character by which it is removed from real experience; in being emphasised by intensity of expression and by contrast it is of course equally removed from the world of abstractions. Thus it is true here, as everywhere else, that "art is art because it is not nature."

But among the lyric poets themselves there are some in whose verse the musical quality becomes more distinct than it does in the verse of those who may be characterised by their use of one of the two methods described. The musical quality in the verse of the poets referred to above is of course unmistakable, but it is not the quality which we select to characterise them. In the one case intensity in the expression of a mood is most characteristic, in the other strangeness in the colouring. But there are some poets who are pre-eminently "musical," whom the musical quality of their verse would be selected to characterise. Is there any peculiarity in their mode of treating the material of all poetry, by which this still greater detachment of form from matter can be explained?

In order to determine this, the best way of proceeding seems to be to compare the poets of lyrical genius of some one literature, and to try to discover what those poets have in common who, in musical quality of verse, are distinguished above the rest. For this purpose we may be allowed to choose English literature.

The first great English poet who is above all things musical is Milton. The distinction of musical from picturesque qualities has indeed been used as a means of defending Milton's claim to be placed in the first order of poets against those critics who have complained that he does not suggest many subjects for pictures. And we must place Milton among poets whose genius is of the lyrical kind, though most of his work is not technically lyrical—especially if we accept as universal among the greater poets the distinction of lyric from dramatic genius. Spenser's verse is, of course, extremely musical; but we do not think of the music of his verse as that which is most characteristic of him. His distinction consists rather in what Coleridge described as the dream-like character of his imagery. After Milton, the next great poet who is eminently musical is Shelley. It will be said that Coleridge and Keats are, equally with Shelley, poets whose verse has the finest qualities of rhythm. But in Keats, what Mr. Arnold has called his "natural magic," and in Coleridge certain other imaginative qualities, are what we think of as characteristic; for these qualities are scarcely distinguishable from the medium of expression; the music of the verse is not felt as something that produces an effect of its own apart from the effect of other artistic qualities. Now in some of Shelley's lyrics no formal quality seems to exist except the music; a clear intellectual meaning is always present, but often there is scarcely any suggestion of distinct imagery. The power that he shows in these lyrics of giving music of verse an existence apart from all other formal qualities is what makes Shelley more of a musical poet than Coleridge or Keats; and no other poet of the same period can be compared with these in this quality of verse. From the period of Shelley to the present time the poet who is distinguished above the rest by the musical quality of his verse is Mr. Swinburne. And

he has, in common with Milton and Shelley, the power, which Shelley perhaps manifests most of all, of detaching musical quality from all other formal qualities. If the same poets have also something in common in their selection of material, then it is probable that this will be found to have some relation to their attaining the last limit of detachment of the essentially poetic quality from all others.

A ground of comparison is found in the power these poets have of expressing what may be called impersonal passion. Like all other poets of lyrical genius, they often express personal emotions; but they also give peculiarly distinct expression to emotions that have an impersonal character—emotions that are associated with a certain class of abstract ideas. What, then, is the nature of these abstract ideas?

They are ideas that may be found by analysis in all poetry. By some poets they are distinctly realised, but oftener they make their influence felt unconsciously; and when they are distinctly realised they may or may not be the objects of emotion. They represent the different ways in which the contrast is conceived between the movement of external things on the one hand, and the desires and aspirations of man on the other. The opposition of man and things outside is implicit in Greek tragedy, for example, as the idea of fate. And both in ancient and modern lyric poetry the conception of the dark background of necessity gives by contrast an intenser colouring to the expression of particular moods. There can be no finer example of this than the fifth ode of Catullus, where the peculiar intensity of effect is given by the reflection that is interposed:—

“Soles occidere et redire possunt;
Nobis, cum semel occidit brevis lux,
Nox est perpetua una dormienda.”¹

¹ “Suns may set and rise again; we, when once our brief light has set, must sleep for ever in perpetual night.”

But this contrast may not be employed merely to give emphasis to personal moods; it may become independently the object of an emotion. Now the three English poets whom we have seen grounds for comparing, all express an aspiration towards a certain ideal of freedom. This aspiration is, on the emotional side, sympathy with the human race, or with the individual soul in its struggle against necessity, against external things whose “strength detains and deforms,” and against the oppression of custom and arbitrary force; on the intellectual side it is belief in the ultimate triumph of the individual soul over the circumstances that oppose its development, or of man over destiny. But with fundamental identity, both of ideas and of sentiments, there is difference in the form they assume. The exact difference can only be made clear by a comparison of particular poems.

In his essay on Mr. Matthew Arnold's poems, Mr. Swinburne has said that the ‘Thyrsis’ of Mr. Arnold makes a third with ‘Lycidas’ and ‘Adonais,’ and that these are the three greatest elegiac poems, not only in the English language, but in the whole of literature. Some readers may be inclined to add Mr. Swinburne's own ‘Ave atque Vale’ to the scanty list. If we compare his elegy with the elegies of Milton and Shelley, the difference in the form assumed by the idea the three poets have in common becomes distinct. For Milton the constraint that is exercised by things, their indifference to man, is embodied in “the blind fury with the abhorred shears;” with Shelley the mutability of all the forms in which life manifests itself is the intellectual motive of this as of many other poems; while Mr. Swinburne brings the permanent background of silence and unconsciousness into contrast with the individual spirit, and represents it as absorbing all things into itself. Though in all three poems the idea of future fame as a compensation for the temporary vic-

tory of blind forces is suggested, there is nevertheless a difference in the form in which confidence in the final victory of the soul over destiny expresses itself; but this is seen more clearly in other poems than in these, which are partly personal in motive. The triumph of the human soul is conceived by Milton as a supremacy of the individual will over circumstance. This conception is above all that of 'Samson Agonistes.' Shelley expresses the belief in the permanence of certain ideas, such as that of "intellectual beauty," under all changes of superficial appearance. And with Mr. Swinburne, just as the opposition of man and destiny is represented in its most general form—

"Fate is a sea without shore, and the soul is
a rock that abides;
But her ears are vexed with the roar and
her face with the foam of the tides;"

—so the triumph of man over destiny is represented in its most general form as the conquest of external things by "the spirit of man."

It is through this power they have of representing an ideal as triumphant that poetic form becomes more separate in the work of these than of other poets. The general relation between manifestation of lyrical power and mode of treatment of the material presented by life was found at first to be that the more completely experience has been resolved into its elements and transformed into a new subjective world, the more distinct must formal poetic qualities become. It was said that this transformation may be brought about either by the interpreting power of a peculiar personality, or by a heightening of the colours of some typical episode of human experience. But, as we have seen, there is a further stage of this transformation. By a kind of insight that belongs to the highest class of poetic minds of the lyrical order, certain tendencies for ideals to be realised are selected from among all actual tendencies of things, and then become

the objects of emotion which embodies itself in poetic form. Now to associate emotion in this way with abstract ideas is a means of making the "criticism of life" that is contained in poetry still more remote from life itself. The power of expressing impersonal passion is, therefore, on its intellectual side merely the most complete development of the way of looking at life that was found to be characteristic of the lyricist.

The connection that actually exists between the highest qualities of rhythmical expression and a certain way of viewing the world, is thus seen to have grounds in the nature of things. But when the detachment of poetic form as a thing existing by itself is said to be the effect that is characteristic of a particular group of poets, it must not be understood that these poets are limited to effects of one kind. They are able to deal with subjects and to produce effects that are outside the sphere of other lyric poets; but this does not prevent them from having equal powers with the rest within that sphere. Hence there are differences in the effect of their work as a whole, depending on differences in the combination of other artistic qualities with the essentially poetic quality, besides the differences already discussed. This will be seen if we carry the parallel a little further.

There is, for example, a difference between Milton's treatment of external nature under its imaginative aspect and that of the two later poets. In reading Milton, the peculiar imaginative effect experienced is that which is produced by the contemplation of enormous spaces. The later poets, on the other hand, give a characteristic quality to their imaginative representations of nature by endowing the elementary forces and forms of the world with a kind of life. Objects are not described as portions of a mechanism, but are identified with a spirit that gives them motion. Two equally perfect examples of this are the descrip-

tion of dawn at the opening of the fourth act of 'Prometheus Unbound' and the description in one of the choruses of 'Erechtheus' (in the passage beginning "But what light is it now leaps forth on the land" . . .), of the sudden re-appearance of the sun after having been obscured. There is nothing in Milton corresponding to this mode of conceiving nature. The spheres, with him, are guided by spirits that act on them from outside; they are themselves lifeless.

In some respects, however, Mr. Swinburne resembles Milton and is unlike Shelley. This is the case as regards specially picturesque effects. Shelley suggests a greater number of distinct pictures corresponding to particular moments; with Milton and with Mr. Swinburne the picturesque effect is not so easily distinguished at first from the musical effect, but there is a stronger suggestion of a background that remains permanent while individual objects disappear. As has been already said, Shelley does not always attempt picturesque effects; the imagery in some of his lyrics is of the faintest possible kind; it is something that is vaguely suggested by the idea that gives shape to the poem and the emotion that animates it, rather than something that exists for its own sake. But when he does attempt picturesque effects he becomes one of the most picturesque of the poets who can be compared with him as regards music of verse. It is the peculiar character of the effects he produces that prevents this from being always recognised. Many of Shelley's descriptions are exact representations of the more indistinct impressions that are got from natural things; as it has been put by some critics, he describes temporary forms of things rather than permanent objects. His pictures have the effect of a combination of form and colour that has only existed once and will never exist again; of a phase in a series of transformations in the clouds, for example. That is, in describing those changes that are the

material of "poetic pictures," he does not select for most vivid representation the moments that convey the strongest suggestion of permanence, but rather those that convey an idea of fluctuation. When this is considered, the want of suggestions of permanent backgrounds, of solid objects, cannot be regarded as a defect; for the presence of these would be inconsistent with the production of a picture of the kind described. It is possible, however, that a relation might be discovered between Shelley's power of producing pictures of this kind and a certain want of artistic completeness that is noticed in some of his work. Whatever may be the cause of it, much of Shelley's work appears to have been less elaborated than that of Milton or of Mr. Swinburne. There is less "form" in the more restricted sense—that is, less purely literary quality. In Milton there are always present certain qualities of style that could not be imagined by a critic to be the result of anything but the most complete artistic consciousness. A similar quality of style is perceived in Mr. Swinburne's work. As an example of the extent to which he manifests this quality, it is sufficient to refer again to 'Ave atque Vale.'

The difference between the picturesque qualities of Shelley's work and of Mr. Swinburne's may be illustrated by comparing their mode of treatment of such a conception as that of a procession of divine forms. There is in one of the best known lyrical passages of 'Hellas' a description of "the Powers of earth and air" disappearing from the eyes of their worshippers—

"Swift as the radiant shapes of sleep
From one whose dreams are Paradise."

If we compare this with the passage in 'The Last Oracle' beginning

"Old and younger gods are buried and be-
gotten," . . .

the difference that has been pointed out becomes quite clear. Shelley's imagery is in itself more consistent:

although the images that are suggested are vague and fluctuating, yet they call up a picture that can be realised as a whole by the imagination. The passage in Mr. Swinburne's poem does not suggest imagery that can be realised so distinctly merely as imagery; but the forms that "go out discrowned and disanointed" give the impression of being more concrete than those described by Shelley: a more vivid sense is also conveyed of something that remains while all forms perish one after the other; the "divers births of godheads" are contrasted with "the soul that gave them shape and speech." An idea similar to this is indeed suggested in the chorus of 'Hellas,' but it is not brought out so distinctly. Shelley makes the idea of the changing phases of the perpetual flux of forms most vivid; Mr. Swinburne, on the other hand, makes most vivid the idea of that which is contrasted with all temporary forms of things. Thus it has been remarked that he often employs conceptions like those of the avatars in Hindu mythologies. In the poems of 'Dolores' and 'Faustine,' for example, there are conceptions of this kind. The ideal figures in these poems are not ghosts like Heine's "gods in exile," but embodiments of a spirit that is conceived as having remained always the same while changing its superficial attributes in passing from one age to another.

Returning from this attempt to characterise some of the resemblances and differences in the work of those poets who have more in common than any other of the greater English poets, we come upon the question whether the general idea that has

been partially developed can be applied to dramatic as well as to lyric poetry. In its application to dramatic poetry (supposing this to be possible), it could not, of course, receive the development of which it is capable when applied to the work of poets whose genius is of the lyrical order. The dramatic is more dependent than the lyric genius on the unanalysed material that life presents to it directly; and the conditions of the drama prevent that almost complete detachment of the essentially poetic element which we perceive in some lyrics. On the other hand, this element is intrinsically the same in the drama and in the lyric, though it differs in its mode of manifestation. While it seems in the lyric to assume an existence apart, in the drama it emerges at particular moments in the progress of the action. From the poetic point of view all other parts of the drama exist for the sake of these. And this poetic effect, being produced, like the effect of lyric verse, by the rhythmical expression of emotion, is best described as "musical." No difficulty is presented by dramatic poetry, therefore, as to the central part of the view that has been taken. And if, as has been said, the particular conclusions arrived at in considering lyric poetry are not applicable to the drama, it must at the same time be remembered that the conditions of success in dramatic and in lyric poetry cannot be (as is sometimes thought) altogether unlike. For a lyric element is perceptible in most dramatic poets; and the greatest among those poets who are usually thought of as lyricists have written dramas that rank next to those of the greatest dramatists.

THOMAS WHITTAKER.

AN OLD SCHOOL-BOOK.

In these latter days, when the civilised world seems to be completely agreed upon the value of education, and as completely divided upon educational methods, it is no matter of surprise that we should see an 'Education Library'—a series of volumes professing to cover the considerable amount of ground that lies between "old Greek education" and "the Kindergarten system." In its second volume the library becomes partly biographical. Professor Laurie presents us with an interesting account of the life and educational works of Johannes Amos Comenius—a name probably not familiar to many. In his own day Comenius may be said to have represented Dr. William Smith, the Rev. T. Kerchever Arnold, Lindley Murray, Mrs. Marcet, and Mrs. Trimmer rolled into one. He was also a bishop of the Moravian Church, and lived an active life of eighty years as a pedagogue, a theologian, and, to his misfortune, a prophet, from 1592 to 1671.

I propose to present in some detail a description of a Latin school-book of his, which was extremely popular some two hundred years ago, as it has not come within the scope of Professor Laurie's book to show us any of Comenius's actual productions, and I am the happy possessor of a copy of the 'Orbis Pictus.'

The full title of this book is as follows:—'*JOH. AMOS COMENII Orbis Sensualium Pictus: hoc est, omnia Principalium in Mundo Rerum, et in Vita Actionum PICTURA et NOMENCLATURA*'—a title thus interpreted in the English edition of 1777, '*JOH. AMOS COMENIUS's Visible World: or a Nomenclature, and Pictures, of All the CHIEF THINGS that are in the WORLD, and of MEN's EMPLOYMENTS therein; in above 150 CUTS.*' To this the fol-

lowing note is added:—"Written by the Author in Latin and High Dutch, being one of his last Essays; and the most suitable to Children's Capacities of any he hath hitherto made."

Comenius lived and laboured in the days of the last of three educational reactions. The revival of letters in Europe naturally took effect upon European education. By the Renaissance in this aspect, "for the dry bones," says Professor Laurie, "of grammar, logic, and rhetoric, was substituted the living substance of thought, and the gymnastics of the schools gave place to the free play of mind once more in contact with nature." Such, briefly, was the first of these educational reactions—a return to Realism.

This Realism was soon replaced by Humanism. The Greek and Latin classics began to be studied with delight—first for themselves, soon for their beauty of style and expression. Classical matter before long became less engrossing than classical manner. Again to quote Professor Laurie, "Style became the chief object of the educated class, and successful imitation, and thereafter laborious criticism, became the marks of the highest culture." Such, in brief, was pure Humanism, or pure scholarship.

Comenius may be regarded as the chief prophet of the next reaction—that in favour of Sense-Realism, the essence of which appears to have consisted not in loving Humanism less, but Realism more. The Sense-Realists, as represented by Comenius, must have loved Humanism, for they set themselves, in their educational method, to teach Hebrew, Latin, and Greek both thoroughly and rapidly. But this was only a means to an end, that end being to propagate a knowledge of all arts and sciences; and to show how in

the whole kingdom one and the same speech, government, and religion might be maintained. In education, matter was to come before form; everything was to come through experience and investigation. These principles are evidently kept in view throughout the 'Orbis Pictus,' to a brief description of which I now proceed.

But before one arrives at the *ipsissima verba* of Comenius, a good deal of matter is presented on the threshold by "able editors" and enthusiastic pedagogues in introducing the book in its twelfth edition to the English scholastic public. First we have a letter to the editor from W. Jones, of Pluckley, expressing a belief that "it will lead to a *copia verborum* by the shortest, surest, and pleasantest road; and that it will also serve to prevent in some degree that Pagan ignorance to which many boys are unfortunately left, while they are acquiring Latin in their tender years." Next follows "an Advertisement concerning the eleventh edition," signed by "J.H.," and dated from London. "J.H." in rather confused language complains that without the Comenian method "the generality of schools go on in the same old dull road, wherein a great part of children's time is lost in a tiresome heaping up a Pack of dry and unprofitable or pernicious Notions (for surely little better can be said of a great part of that Heathenish stuff they are tormented with; like the feeding them with hard Nuts, which, when they have almost broke their teeth with cracking, they find either deaf or to contain but very rotten and unwholesome Kernels), whilst Things really perspective of the Understanding and useful in every state of Life are left unregarded, to the reproach of our Nation, where all other Arts are improved and flourish well, only this of Education of Youth is at a stand." Then comes the author's preface to the reader, starting with these words, which perhaps read better in the original High Dutch than in their

translated form: "Instruction is a means to expel rudeness, with which young wits ought to be well furnished in schools." The author goes on to express a hope that his book "may entice witty children to it, that they may not conceit a torment to be in the school, but dainty fare." It will "serve to stir up the Attention . . . for the Senses . . . evermore seek their own objects, and if they be away they grow dull and wry themselves hither and thither out of a weariness of themselves; but when their objects are present, they grow merry, wax lively, and willingly suffer themselves to be fastened upon them." More follows, till the author says, "But enough; let us come to the thing itself." But we turn the page only to arrive at a letter from the translator "to all judicious and industrious Schoolmasters," signed by "Charles Hole, from my school in Lothbury." To this is added "The Judgment of Mr. Hezekiah Woodward, some time an eminent schoolmaster in London," in support of teaching by pictures; and on the next page we find ourselves in another world, the 'Orbis Pictus.'

On a daïs in the open country is seated the master; before him stands a chubby boy. Both are pointing with the forefinger to the skies. The adjoining plain is being scoured by a very large wild animal, of a species probably now extinct. In the nearer distance we have the usual village church; in the extreme distance some of those pyramids, with their sharp edges worn off, which in this wonderful book always do duty for mountains. The scene represents the "Invitation." The master invites the boy to "learn to be wise." After a short dialogue, the boy says, "See, here I am, lead me in the name of God," and is immediately introduced to "a lively and vocal alphabet." Comenius's motto seems to have been, in a slightly altered sense, "*Recte si possis; si non, quocumque modo rem*;" and he calls upon his artist to illustrate every subject he touches upon. No abstraction

is allowed to escape; every virtue and every vice is personified to enable the artist to depict it. Anything more grotesque than the artist's drawings it is hard to imagine. He generally makes the mistake of forgetting that a figure represented as right-handed on the wood will turn out left-handed in the impression on paper—a mistake I remember to have seen in a Bible of the date of Charles the Second, where the Judges are given in a series of portraits, and the only right-handed man among them is Ehud. When it is added that an illustration of the human soul is given by Comenius's artist, it will be seen that he had the courage of his opinions. With regard to animals, (by whose sounds Comenius helps his pupils through the vocal alphabet), *recte* is out of the question with the artist. He is obliged to fall back upon the *quocumque modo* method, and adds to each letter a drawing more or less unlike some creature whose sounds are taken to represent a letter. His zoology also is continually at fault. Thus we have in the alphabet such specimens as the following:—

<i>Cornix cornicatur</i>	à à	A a
The Crow crieth		
<i>Cicada stridet</i>	ci ci	C c
The Grasshopper chirpeth		
<i>Upupa dicit</i>	du du	D d
The Whooppoo saith		
<i>Anser gignit</i>	ga ga	G g
The Goose gagleth		
<i>Mus minrit</i>	li	I i
The Mouse chirpeth		
<i>Ursus murmurat</i>	mmmum	M m
The Bear grumbleth		
<i>Felis clamat</i>	nau nau	N n
The Cat crieth		
<i>Pullus pippit</i>	pi pi	P p
The Chicken pippeth		
<i>Tabanus dicit</i>	ds ds	Z z
The Breeze or Horselly saith		

The 'Orbis Pictus' is divided into one hundred and fifty-three sections, each of which is arranged on the following plan:—The subject matter is given in two parallel columns of English and Latin. Above these stands an illustration. Realism is attained by putting the same number to each detail in the verbal description and to

the corresponding part of the pictorial treatment of the subject. In section III., for example, which treats of "the World," we find at the top of the page a wood-cut, showing an ill-favoured man and woman; a large stone for the former to sit upon; a ditch containing a whale and a couple of seals; a mud-bank affording just room enough for a horse, a bear, a human-faced lion, and a duck; two mountains and a ploughed field; a dozen or so of birds; a bank of clouds and ten stars diversifying a black firmament; and six trees of the Noah's Ark type. Beneath we read—

The Heaven, 1—hath fire and stars	<i>Cælum, 1—habet nem et Stellas.</i>
The Clouds, 2—hang in the air.	<i>Nubes, 2—pendent in Aere.</i>
Birds, 3—fly under the clouds.	<i>Aves, 3—volant sub Nubibus.</i>

On the subject of the air, Comenius, it is to be feared, surrenders Realism to Humanism, or at least modern science to classical lore. "A wind underground," he says, "causeth an earthquake," evidently with a reference to Æschylus, 'Prometheus Bound,' 1068.

There are several sections on the fruits of the earth, trees, and flowers, which the artist makes very far from "pleasant to the eye." A Dutch taste inclines Comenius to end his remarks on flowers with the words "The tulip is the grace of flowers." In the department devoted to living creatures Realism is decidedly intermittent. "A living creature," according to the definition given, "liveth, perceiveth, moveth itself; is born, dieth, is nourished, and groweth; standeth, or sitteth, or lieth, or goeth." Comenius is hard upon certain birds. "The owl," he says, "is the most despicable, the whooppoo the most nasty." And some of his information seems doubtful, as "The bittern putteth his bill into the water and belloweth like an ox;" some superfluous, as "The water-wagtail waggeth the tail." And surely he is behind even his own times in his section on "wild cattle," where he tells us "The unicorn hath

but one horn, but that a precious one." And again, "The lizard and the salamander (that liveth long in the fire) have feet; the dragon, a winged serpent, killeth with his breath, the basilisk with his eyes, and the scorpion with his poisonous tail." A very doubtful kind of Realism is gained in the section on fish by the artist's determination to make them swim *on* and not *in* the water, in order to present a more complete view of them.

Next we enter upon the subject of Man; first his creation, then his seven ages, then his anatomy. Nothing is left to the imagination or the knowledge of the pupil. He must not be allowed to learn the Latin for "a thumb" or "a beard" without having his gaze directed to a mis-representation of the same. Very horrible is Comenius on "the flesh and bowels;" sometimes amusing, as in the remark, "The skin being pulled off the flesh appeareth, not in a continuous lump, but being distributed, as it were in stult puddings (*distributa tanquam in farcimina*), which they call muscles." Soon after this we arrive at the pictorial illustration of "the soul of man." It is merely the outline of the bodily figure exhibited on the background of a sheet. The next subject is that of "Deformed and Monstrous People." In order to exhibit various kinds of deformity our artist has taken three figures—one of a giant, another of a dwarf, the third of a two-bodied monster; and between these unhappy persons he distributes those deformities to which flesh is heir. "Amongst the monstrous," says Comenius, "are reckoned the jolt-headed, the great-nosed, the blubber-lipped, the blub-cheeked, the goggle-eyed, the wry-necked, the great-throated, the crump-backed, the crump-footed, the steeple-crowned;" and, to make something of an anticlimax, he ends with "add to these the bald-pated."

We now pass on to men's occupations. The picture devoted to Hunting shows a man on horseback in the act of piercing with a great spear a

boar, which is already held by the ear by a beagle, while "the tumbler, or greyhound," for some unknown reason, prances along two yards in advance. In another place an extremely feeble bear, also held by the ear, is being belaboured by a man with a huge club. In the background is a wolf looking out of a hole in the ground, and two nondescript animals cantering over a hill; of which animals Comenius, anticipating the judicious remarks of Mrs. Glass says, "If anything getteth away it escapeth, as here a hare and a fox." The chapter on Butchery is elaborate. In his anxiety that young wits should have a complete *copia verborum* regarding things concrete, Comenius supplies them with Latin for, (and, of course, illustrations of,) four kinds of "puddings," viz., chitterlings (*faliscæ*), bloodings (*apexabones*), liverings (*tomacula*), and sausages (*botuli*, also called *lucanice*).

A very dismal idea is given of "the Feast." Four guests are squeezed in at the end of the table (which is "covered with a carpet"), while one solitary gentleman, "the master of the feast," is accommodated with the whole length of the same. Four empty plates, two covered vegetable-dishes, an open jam-tart, a salt-cellar, a loaf, two knives, one fork, one spoon, and one napkin, (most of these things far out of reach), form the "Persici apparatus." A late guest is washing his hands at a "laver, ewer, hand-bason, or bowl," (*ablunt manus e gutturnio vel aquali, super malluvium vel pelvim*).

"A school," says Comenius, "is a shop in which young wits are fashioned to virtue, and it is distinguished into forms." Some of these young wits are depicted as devoting themselves to their work. But there are others who "talk together and behave themselves wantonly and carelessly; these are chastised with a ferule and with a rod." Of the student it is said, "he picketh out of books all the best things into his own manual, or marketh them with a dash or a little

star. Being to sit up late, he setteth a candle on a candlestick. Richer persons use a taper, for a tallow candle stinketh and smoaketh." On the "Arts belonging to Speech" Comenius is not satisfactory. "Rhetorick doth as it were paint a rude form of speech with oratory flourishes, such as are figures, elegancies, adages, apothegms, sentences, similies, hieroglyphicks, &c." Rhetorick is treated by the artist as a female figure adorned with a feather erect on her head, and drawing a man's head with chalk on a slate. "Poetry gathereth these flowers of speech, and tieth them as it were into a little garland, and so making of prose a poem, it maketh several sorts of verses and odes, and is therefore crowned with laurel." Amongst musical instruments we have a few that are now, I suppose, obsolete, the Jew's-trump, for example, the rattle, and the shepherd's-harp.

The section on Philosophy is graced with a very curious illustration. The philosopher, standing in front of a table on which is a heap of counters and on a slate a simple addition or subtraction sum, (it is impossible to say which, for in either case the answer is wrong), is pointing to nature generally. The supernaturalist, who "searcheth out the causes and effects of things," is touching his biretta to the philosopher, and preparing to examine some vegetables growing at his feet.

After some instruction in Geometry and Astronomy, we come to a subject which one would have expected Sense-Realism to treat with care and exactness, that is, Geography. We first find a map in outline of the Western Hemisphere, and Comenius says here, "The ocean compasseth it" (the earth) "about, and five seas wash it—the Mediterranean Sea, the Baltick Sea, the Red Sea, the Persian Sea, and the Caspian Sea." This is evidently meant to apply loosely to Europe, which we shall come to directly. Under a map of the Eastern Hemisphere occurs this remarkable passage: "It" (the earth) "is divided

into three continents; this of ours, which is divided into Europe, Asia, Africa, and America (whose inhabitants are antipodes to us), and the South Land, yet unknown." Not less surprising than this is the map of Europe, from which Sicily is entirely omitted, while the word Switzerland is printed in capitals across the Black Sea. In those days the Crimea was an island. Finland, moreover, lay between Norway and Sweden.

From this unrealistic view of geography we pass somewhat abruptly to the subject of Moral Philosophy, on which Comenius thus discourses: "This life is a way or a place divided into two ways, like Pythagoras's letter Y, broad on the left-hand track, narrow on the right: that belongs to vice, this to virtue. Mind, young man, imitate Hercules; leave the left-hand way, turn from vice; the entrance is fair, but the end is ugly, and steep down. Go on the right hand, though it be thorny; no way is unpassable to virtue: follow whither virtue leadeth, through narrow places, to stately palaces, to the tower of honour. Bridle in the wild horse of affection, lest thou fall down headlong. See thou dost not go amiss on the left hand in an ass-like sluggishness, but go onwards constantly; persevere to the end, and thou shalt be crowned."

"Prudence" is represented as holding in her right hand a mirror, which reflects a man's face, and so "represents things past;" in her left a "prospective glass" (*telescopium*), through which "she watcheth opportunity (which, having a bushy forehead, and being bald-pated, and, moreover, having wings, doth quickly slip away) and catcheth it." "Diligence" appears as a female reaper. "She putteth nothing off till the morrow; nor doth she sing the crow's song, which saith over and over Cras, Cras." "Temperance," rather strangely, is a muscular female, left-handed, as is so often the case, pouring liquor very freely into a bowl. On one arm is suspended a bridle. In the background are several intem-

perate persons, of whom one is being very ill indeed, and is attended by a swine; another "brabbles"; another sits on a three-legged stool, presumably that of repentance, but nothing is said about him. "Fortitude" is a woman got up as a warrior, and attended by a heraldic lion. The section on Patience is very remarkable. A kneeling female figure, with a lamb on one side, and an anchor on the other, is holding up her hands to heaven. Supported on a sword, a blazing torch, and a chain is a book, open at the word "Injurias." In the background is a ship in a thunderstorm, a birch-rod flying in the air, and a bright sun. Thus are depicted her trials and her hopes. "On the contrary, the impatient person walleth, lamenteth, rageth against himself, grumbleth like a dog, despaireth, and becometh his own murderer." He is shown as falling on a sword and tearing his hair, while his grumbling mood is alluded to in a picture of a barking dog.

Humanity is personified in the figures of two stout women waltzing together. Their faces are, as is usual with the artist, repulsive; but the more ill-favoured one is used to point the moral, more easily announced than acted upon, "Be thou sweet and lovely in thy countenance." In the background are seen two pairs of "froward men," one pair fencing, (left-handed again), the other pair wrestling. In front a pair of turtle-doves are billing and cooing: in the extreme distance in a cave Envy, a miserable object, "pineth herself away."

"Justice" is equally repulsive. She sits "on a square stone—for she ought to be immovable—with hood-winked eyes, that she may not respect persons, stopping the left ear to be reserved for the other party." "Liberality" is shown as throwing three coins into a poor man's hat. Her right foot is placed on a strong box, for "she submiteth her wealth to herself, not herself to it." Behind her is the covetous man on his knees scraping up the ground with his nails, and by his side two bags, one marked with

"1000"; and on a hill behind him is the prodigal, standing on one leg, tossing coins into the air with one hand, and holding a bird with the other. What this last symbol means is not explained.

Comenius being desirous of teaching young wits the Latin for such distant relations as "the great great grandmother's grandmother," "the nephew's nephew's nephew," and "the niece's niece's niece," dispenses with personification, and allows the artist to treat Consanguinity as a tree: after which we are introduced to a family circle, where the father "maintaineth his children by taking pains," (in this case he is painting), and the mother nurses an infant, who appears next in a cradle; then, as learning to go by a standing stool; again, as a lad "accustomed to piety," and with a painful expression of face reading a good book; lastly, sitting at a table learning to labour. A birch-rod on a cushion illustrates the remark, "It is chastised if it be not dutiful."

"The tormenting of Malefactors" is treated in a truly horrible picture. Malefactors therein are suffering various torments. One wretch, bound hand and foot, and wearing a night-cap, is being dragged by a horse to the place of execution; another is having his tongue removed; a woman, held by the ear, has just lost a hand; two men are astride a wooden horse; others are being roasted, hanged, beheaded, or broken on a wheel.

In his section on "Merchandising," Comenius is rather hard on retail dealers. "Shop-keepers, pedlars, and brokers would also be called merchants. The seller braggeth of a thing that is to be sold." When we come to the subject of "Physic," we are introduced to a sick man's room, where a large table is set out with potions, troches, and electuaries, in which, however, Comenius seems to have little faith, for the good bishop says, "Diet and prayer is the best physic." "Burial" is somewhat strangely followed by "a Stage-play," the subject being the Prodigal Son; though the

boards are in possession of the fool making jests. Of "Tennis-play" Comenius says, "That is the sport of noblemen to stir their body." Boys' sports are mainly restricted to running upon the ice in "serick shoes," running races, nine-pins, striking a ball through a ring "with a bandy," "scourging a top," "shooting with a trunk," and swinging upon a "merry trotter." Some chapters on Warfare, fearfully and wonderfully illustrated, are followed by "Religion," which Comenius divides into Gentilism, Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism. Godliness is figured in, apparently, a kneeling pew-opener of the female sex, "treading Reason under foot, that barking dog." "The Indians," says Comenius, "even at this day worship the devil (*venerantur cacodæmona*)." It will not tend to edification to follow him into Judaism and Christianity, but we must not pass over the section on Providence. It is amusing to see how the Moravian bishop himself, despising the superstitions of his time, had not quite escaped from the land of bondage. "Men's states," he says, "are not to be attributed to fortune or chance, or to the influence of the stars (comets indeed are wont to pretend no good)." The illustration shows a man giving his right hand to a good angel, and with his left repelling the advances of a demon, who is attempting to put a noose round his neck. Behind is a left-handed witch, drawing a circle round herself, and calling on the devil with charms, on whom Comenius pronounces woe. A section on the Last Judgment, with a most shocking illustration, is the last. But before we end we are again shown the master and the boy, as in the first illustration. "Thus," says the former, "thou hast seen in short all things that can be showed, and hast learned the chief words in the Latin tongue. Go on now and read other good books, and thou shalt become learned, wise, and godly. Farewell."

It is hard to join with the editor in his "lament that the 'Orbis Pictus' is now fallen totally into disuse." Even

where the execution of the idea is not so absurdly faulty as in this edition of the 'Orbis Pictus,' both in Comenius's own Latin and in the translator's English, the advantage of such object-lessons is not very obvious. Probably a Latin vocabulary is best acquired indirectly in the learner's general reading. But if it is to be taught by the direct method, it must surely be equally useless to present him with a picture of that with which he is already familiar, or to think by such means to familiarise him with that which is new to him. In the plan of the 'Orbis Pictus,' Comenius seems to forget that Sense-Realism, like everything else, may be overdone.

In our present systems of classical teaching the overdoing is generally believed to be on the side of Humanism, or, as we should now call it, pure scholarship. The outside world, from time to time making its voice heard in denunciation of "a parcel of Latin and Greek and stuff," and complaining of the Universities as "lining the heads" of their students with a quantity of unpractical classical lore, if it at all recognised the distinction between Sense-Realism and Humanism, would, no doubt, make its severest attacks upon the latter. The common sense view of the subject is that we should read the classics for their matter rather than for their manner. Yet, in adjusting the balance between these two, the pedagogue must beware lest his pupils mistake the exact nature of the matter through not completely grasping and understanding the manner in which it is expressed. If he is a man of doubts and scruples, he is pretty sure to find himself continually oscillating between Sense-Realism and Humanism: asking himself at one time whether his classes are really entering into and grasping the subject on which they are professedly engaged; at another, whether they are not getting loose and vague views of the same, through an insufficient acquaintance with the verbal forms in which it is expressed. One day he is shocked to

find that his boys, who have succeeded in turning a speech in Livy correctly from the *oratio recta* into the *oratio obliqua*, are not aware whose speech it is. The next day he sets himself to inform them on the subject and its context, and the day after he is equally shocked to detect them in incorrect uses of moods and tenses.

Comenius is by no means the only author of Latin school books who has over-done Sense-Realism. It is still carried beyond the limits of common sense by editors, who, starting with the laudable desire to impress a learner with the importance of the matter he is to read, proceed to obstruct his sense-realisation of the same by inviting his attention to a criticism of a classic before he has read a word of the classic itself; and call on the student not at once to read the book itself, but first of all what they have to say about it. The wits of boys, ever ready to wander, often suffer from the eccentricities of editors, who, if they bear in mind Comenius's maxim, "Matter before form," forget the maxim of common sense, "Illustration must not precede." How different these arts from those of a great philosopher who carried Sense-Realism into practice! "We go," said that great man, "upon the practical mode of teaching; the regular educational system. C-l-e-a-n, clean, verb active, to make bright, to scour. W-i-n, win, d-e-r, der, winder, a casement. When the boy knows this out of a book, he goes and does it." *Corruptio optimi pessima*: the Comenian method misapplied has produced a Squeers.

The outside world will, at any rate, readily agree that Humanism has been greatly overdone. Except by scholars, pure scholarship is commonly condemned as unreal and unpractical. But there is one light in which exact scholarship may be regarded as a thing most practical and useful. The classics still remain a most important factor in our competitive examinations; and examiners, whose aim it is to find out, not how much a man has

read and remembers, but what sort of brains he possesses, are well aware that subject-matter may be crammed, that scholarship may not. It is *vous*, not cramming, that enables a man to extract something like the exact meaning from a passage of Thucydides or Tacitus, and to express in idiomatic Latin or Greek the thoughts conveyed in an idiomatic piece of English.

But human nature is not sooner nauseated with cramming than with that "successful imitation and laborious criticism," into which Humanism, when overdone, is liable to degenerate. In these days the elegant uses of *quippe qui* and *admodum* and *esse videtur*, &c., will not carry a man very far in the estimation of a classical examiner. Most people will sympathise with the Cambridge poll man, to whom *variae lectiones* and sagacious emendations and conjectures were a weariness not to be endured; and who betook himself from such as told him that the right reading or rendering might be this or might be that, to his faithful "poll-coach," who told him what it *was*. And there is something almost melancholy in certain authentic stories told of a distinguished classical scholar of our own days. Let us hope that the spirit of Comenius hovered near, when this scholarly man for the first time saw in a hedgerow the flower for which he had been accustomed for years to give a conventional English translation when coming across it in the classics, and stood spell-bound as Sense-Realism revealed to him as a vegetable what Humanism had concealed from him under the veil of a word. And let us hope that the spirit of Comenius was far away in the Elysian fields, when that same distinguished scholar met a friend who told him that he had been lately reading the 'Wasps' of Aristophanes. "Oh, then," said the Humanist, "perhaps you can tell me what conclusion you have arrived at with regard to the distinction between *τοί γε* and *γέ τοί*."

PRESENT-DAY IDEALISM.

THE worthy citizen, who sobbed his heart away as he read 'The Sorrows of Werther,' but heaved not one sympathetic sigh as he worked "the national razor," was an unmistakable type of the era to which he was useful, if not ornamental. Any maudlin sentiment, suitable to his own situation, would touch the passive chords of his hopelessly crushed-down nature; it would wake him into the reality of the things about him; it would rouse him to penetrate the fantastic show of destruction around him, till the whole energy of his existence was directed by the inspiration that at least, if pain had to be endured, he might do what he could to cure it. He was the unconscious reflex of the things of his own world. He was the mirror of the mob.

And so the fable of Proteus may give its moral to our tale. One example, taken out of a variety of forms, may be used as a microcosm, and therein may be seen a wondrous affinity to all the others. The hangman of Strasbourg is, for our purpose, an embodiment of the upheaval of the thought and passion of his time. He knew what the sublime was, in a very low degree. The wine of life that he spilt every day on behalf of an indivisible brotherhood was a spectacle and a puppet-show. That which was the man is no enigma. He stood (and he still stands) on the blood-stained summit of his century, the monument of defiant sentiment.

Such an inheritance was not to be despised by an age of machinery and politics. It willingly snatched such an ideal from the hand of strife, to fashion it without hindrance into an emblem of utilitarian practicability. "In these days," said a present-day seer, "man can do almost all things,

only not obey." Verily and indeed the italics contain the gist of all modern prophecy and preaching. And now the fond dreamer of reverence and sanctity must content himself with a nightmare of his own creation, in that a phantom will ever unlock the lids of his weary eyes, and he will see in "the dim and distant" future something standing on the summit of this nineteenth century of Christendom. This statue does not embody his ideal. This something is the type of everything, except what he would like to see. This ideal has lost its sentiment. It is still defiant, but happily defiant, for it bears on its brows a wreath of freedom's conquest. And yet for all that, the psychologist will mark that its forehead is rather low and narrow; all things look natural to its undisturbed reflections; its title-deeds of acres are the only literary encumbrance about it, and it has quite forgotten to lift its stolid eyes upwards. Fond dreamer of reverence and sanctity, how dost thou like this vision of democratic idealism?

And yet, will it not be so! The ideal can fulfil no mission in the world until it become the practical.

"Art is the application of knowledge to a practical end"—that is, art, the expression of the ideal, can have no fulfilment thereof until it become an applied science. Therefore we must conclude that even the wholesale destruction of plate-glass and other private commodities by a humorous crowd of East-end roughs may appear sublime. It is the practical expression of an utilised ideal.

When Brutus joined hands with murderers and put his steel into the heart of his friend, he at least had some thought of an Utopian Republic. When Charlotte Corday mixed the

blood of Marat with the water of his bath, her hand was worthy to hold a martyr's crown, even though she knew but vaguely for what her own life was being spent. But when Marat put his signature to his daily list for "the evening paper" of *La Force*, and when the supposed-to-be-starving, out-of-work labourer of London shook his brawny fist at the inhabitants of clubland, Democracy lost its dignity.

The value of such expressions may be considered of no effect in the scales of cause and effect of ideas and facts. The optimist will fill our ears with cotton-wool. These expressions, he will tell us, are unfaithful to the best conceptions of the people in general, and thereby an obstruction to the progress of practical utility as an universal expression of the present phases of leading thought and action. But the dreamer of sanctity will remove the cotton-wool, and insert in its place the tongue of an ear-trumpet. This will in all probability be connected with a magnifying phone of some sort or other. The feathery footstep of a domestic tormentor will sound like the thunder of a prairie buffalo. When the hearing is strained for the sound of the coming age, there will steal over the senses an indistinct murmur of the tread of a million footsteps on the hollow vaults of buried creeds, and the crash and clatter of shattered glass, which might have been once the glory of old-world institutions. As a modern apostle of criticism heard the key of the Puritans of old turn on the freedom of true knowledge, so now will the ear of the listener hear the dungeon-door of time for ever close with a world-reverberation on the shackled skeleton of platonic idealism.

Voices in market-place, voices in lecture-room, voices in workshop, voices in music-scales, voices in brush and pen, wilderness and waste-land, fertility and production—all crying aloud: but the "Great Franchised" will not listen. They are not sufficiently siren-like to woo his greatness to the old-

fashioned pursuit of peace and plenty along the so-called path of contentment. That old word of magic—*vovós*—has been eliminated from his amended lexicon. He has an ear only for those who will plant him a pretty garden for the summer months. He cares not for the winter:

"It will be rain to-night.
Let it come down."

He has self-love, and he has fingers to count his money on. One may say, he will stand for ever with his stolid eyes downwards.

Picture of futurity! limned with the prophet's pencil! Surely the prophet must ever paint his canvas (if it be a work of life) with the pigments which the present lends to hand. When the gods of old had become a laughing-stock, their temples were still the abode of all the holiness and reverence of the democratic Hellenes. The outlines of Greek philosophy may assist us—Gorgias, Prodicus, and friends, Aristotle, Plato, and enemies, may light up the answer when we ask why this was so. But these are suns and planets of the first magnitude by the side of the sulphur match-lights of this modern universe. The Greek never lost his dignity. This was not the result of some Oriental birthright. It was the result of centuries of calm absorption. Frieze and statue had burnt their glory into his soul. The Rosicrucian had a motto; so had the Greek. So has not the modern Socialist. He appeals to the volatile in mankind. There can be no true ideal in that which is subject to the caprice of a sudden storm, the thunders of an ever-shifting torrent, or the turbid vortex of a revolutionary maelstrom. The ideal will have a calm surface; then there may be some reflection, some embodiment worth the possession.

All this may be true—as far as it goes; but how far may that be? Phidias carved his name upon the world in the embodiment of his idealisation on the plasters of the Parthe-

non. Meanwhile his brother artist of the Nile found expression for anything of sublime he might have had in him by the erection of monstrous tombstones, which have been the wonder even of a more boastful civilisation than it was his lot to enjoy. Thus, we must confess, there are conceptions and conceptions. The American Republican has an ideal; so has the English Democrat. That of the former is a child of the day; it was born in the back parts of California; it always keeps its hands in its trouser pocket, so that it may never be without the delight of hearing the jingle of the delicious dollar. That of the latter has felt a tinge of shame for watching Jonathan and trying to mimic him; but it is a child of precedent and the past, and on the whole it must work its way to a higher level. England has had an education; America has not. The phases of passing sensation may at times appear to be synonymous; but the causes underneath are flowing in different directions.

The dreamer of sanctity may indeed see a vision of the statue with eyes ever downwards. But that is a statue, not a man. Even if it were, the eyes are also endowed with the faculty of looking upwards. And in so far as it must be a man—as much a man as he who worked the axe of the indivisible brotherhood—we must be prepared to find in the folds of his history some stains of misguided attempts and irretrievable failures. There is nothing that succeeds in this world like failure. It is in this "philosophy of iron" that the remedy lies for the withdrawal of man's best hopes from the present slough and stagnation. If "the lofty-scheming son of Themis" had not been riveted "in indissoluble shackles on a lonely crag," then thieving in heavenly places would have become a petty larceny. To face the unveiled glory of the dawn, to hear the song of the morning stars, Prometheus had to bear the keen arrows of the offended sun-god without, and the keener stings of the con-

sciousness of unjust suffering within. He paid the price for his exaltation, even though it dragged his soul through the muddiest sewers of pain.

Down, down, down the stolid eyes look. Thou speakest, O fantasy-dreamer, with the sad conviction of truth, and sad is the tone of thy voice as of those who hung their harps on the willows of Babylon. But even this captivity has an ending, has an exodus, has a dedication of rebuilt temples, and feasts of the worshippers therein!

Meanwhile, sit down and weep and listen to the conflict on all sides of thee, for such a thing is going on; not a windmill assault-at-arms, in which machinery must beat romance and whirl it round in its ruthless embrace, but a bloodless war of "isms," than which has been no greater since the world began. It hath its troubadours. William Blake hath left us rhymes of this war within the soul. Realism against Idealism—which will win? Down, down, down the stolid eyes look.

Fiction will have no reading save she be clad in highwayman's clothes, with a pistol at every corner and a sword blood-wet to the hilt. Nor does her sister of the histrionic house fare much better unless she be clad likewise, or not clad at all. Crotchets and quavers must dance at caricature ballet-shows, or even the street organ-grinder would fail to get his pennies. The canvas must have "Nature" depicted to the utmost nicety of detail, else it scarce will have a moment's show. As for the poet! he has left a card at the house of the Muses with a P.P.C. scrawled at the corner. The next laureate must gather starch from the wash-tubs of Pope—else his rhymes will not even secure a subsidised publisher.

Down, down, down the stolid eyes look; but the battle still goes on—a deadly game of "French and English," with the *Æsthetic* of *Aceldama* at one extremity of the rope, the *Philistine* of *Billingsgate* at the other, and the

men of mind in the centre. Induction and deduction have travelled "through the looking-glass;" and, in full armour, are belabouring one another in good earnest with echoing blows of age-wrought steel. And yet it is a terrible jest. For Ormuzd fought it out long ago with Ahriman, and Adam had his skirmish with Satan; and while the former won his spurs, the latter lost his Paradise:—

"—eternal tale
Repeated in the lives of all his sons."

It is the everlasting gladiatorial show in the arena of the soul of man; all the principalities and powers of the material and the brutish and the things which are seen, in undying conflict with the senses of power and aspiration and the evidence of things not seen. It is the hand-to-hand death-tussle of the Beast with the Angel. Down, down, down the stolid eyes look: surely the Beast is winning the day.

Then must the divine idealists—the poet, the painter, the tone-maker, the artist of all sorts and conditions of work—cease to be the children of their age?

Not yet: not yet hath the Beast chanted his pæan, nor ever will he. Not yet are we on our knees: the saints of old have not yet heard our passing cry, "Save us, or we perish," Israel must ere long leave Pharaoh in the Red Sea, and Miriam sing her pæan in safety on the shore. "The vain curling of the watery maze" forsooth gives no calm surface for an ideal reflection; but it must not escape attention that a circle in the water

"Never ceases to enlarge itself,
Till by broad spreading it disperse to nought!"

Then after storm cometh great calm. Petty princes of a day may keep the little nationalities of the East in a perpetual imbroglia for a time; but some day a mutual federation may prove a stern barrier to the interference of meddling powers. Glory, as of old, mounts by a ladder of

wretchedness. The pride of Venice, and her freedom of thirteen hundred years, rose "from dirt and seaweed." Propertius was justly proud of the humble origin of mightiest Rome, "a mere grassy hillock before the coming of Phrygian Æneas."

Even for eighteen centuries did the world of science lie eclipsed, from the days of Archimedes, who was disturbed as he was calculating in the dust of his own back garden, to the days of Galileo, who stung the angel of his ideal by a democratic recantation; yet for all that the protoplasm of growth was there. It needed but the peculiar environment, it needed but the application of art to the inquiries of science, and the eclipse was to die away, has died away, and left such a blaze of light as almost to overwhelm the ideal scientists of the present by the fulness of the realisation of their wishes in the past.

Therefore, all Job's comforters, and any pessimists akin thereto, may go to the wall. "All healthy things are sweet-tempered." Gay castles in the air are more enervating than the dungeons conjured up by despair. After all, the rain may come down, but it shall not damp our resolution. We believe there is a divinity to shape the end of all that is divine. The tabernacle of the godlike is with men. Nature uses her crucible as well as her building mortar, and she is faithful even in destruction. She keeps a rag-shop of the torn shreds of human possibilities, as well as a wardrobe of the silks and satins of human accomplishments. The playwright of one age will dress his Macbeth in the distant grandeur of an Æschylus; another will grace his heroine with the poetry of a Sophocles; and yet another will put his Electra into everyday attire, and marry her to a farm-labourer. "*Eyes down*" may be the word of command from a sergeant-major, but for all that he is not a commissioned officer; his company may take his orders, not so the whole battalion. So the creed of a Voltaire,

or rather want of a creed, being an utter want of light, may by its very darkness lead "in the direction of the day."

"There is some soul of goodness in things evil ;"

and "Whoso can look on death will start at no shadows," saith the wisdom of the Greek, long before Shakespeare's name was spelt.

The idealist may still be the child of his age, and may take into his horoscope all that is necessary. But let him not forget all that is possible. Let him look upwards. Let him forget his own wants, ay, and his own happiness. Let him despise the littleness of passing corruptions. Like an æolian

harp, he may take the impression of the accidental breeze ; but he must not give it back, save in the harmony of a nobler age. Let him remember he must ever be in the van, in the front rank, and even in front of that ; let him not shrink to lead the forlorn hope, even though he bear the standard alone.

Then will he teach men to know, to endure, to act, by his own knowledge, his own endurance, his own action. Then will he teach men to strive, to suffer, to be content, by his own toil, his own failure, his own success. Then will labour and duty bring a newer light and a newer freedom. The eyes of the people will look up, and their voice will call him blessed.

GENERAL READERS; BY ONE OF THEM.

I HAVE written in my time a good deal for the magazines: perhaps it would be more truthful to say I have written a good deal to them. *Litera scripta manet*: much of my writing has remained with me, or vanished in the form of pipe-lights—no doubt a more illuminating form than that originally designed for it. My vanity—the patron saint of Grub Street—will not suffer me to suppose there are no others who have known the same mischance. Their experiences may very possibly march with mine. Different editors have different modes of gilding the nauseous pill of rejection: some I have known to thrust it on you undisguised; and doubtless there are acute stages of the scribbling malady which require such drastic treatment, though the instant cruelty which is to bear the fruit of kindness is perhaps rarely appreciated by the patient. But by far the most common form the bitter message takes—and for all its politeness the most irritating, as the most impossible to gainsay—is that which assumes the poor offering, though, like Rose Aylmer, adorned with every virtue and every grace, to lack the one essential quality of being “likely to interest the general reader.”

Who is a General Reader? What is he? Does he disburse shillings and half-crowns at the Right Honourable Mr. Smith's book-stalls, and other places where the magazines are gathered together? Or is he, perchance, some nebulous monster, a phantom (not of delight) born of the weary patience of an editor, still striving in his utmost need to be courteous—

“... an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery”†

“Some read to think—these are rare; some to write—these are com-

mon; and some read to talk—and these form the great majority. The first page of an author not unfrequently suffices for all the purposes of this latter class, of whom it has been said that they treat books as some do lords, they inform themselves of their *titles* and then boast of an intimate acquaintance.” So says the author of ‘Lacon.’ Is any one of these a General Reader? Are they all General Readers? I have heard of a man who every morning of his life reads carefully through the ‘Times,’ the ‘Standard,’ the ‘Daily News,’ the ‘Morning Post,’ and the ‘Daily Telegraph,’ supplementing this generous diet in the afternoon with the ‘Globe’ and the two ‘Gazettes,’ and then making a light supper off the ‘Evening Standard.’ What is he, or, what was he? For it is three or four years since I first heard of him, and can hardly imagine him to be alive now.

In a most agreeable and instructive little book just lately published¹ this voracious bibliophagist rears his unblushing front again, naked and not a whit ashamed. “Your ‘general reader,’ like the gravedigger in ‘Hamlet,’ is hail-fellow with all the mighty dead; he pats the skull of the jester; batters the cheek of lord, lady, or courtier; and uses ‘imperious Caesar’ to teach boys the Latin declensions.” Mr. Harrison does not, as might be thought from this passage, intend the term for a reproach. On the contrary, he says elsewhere that, “whether our reading be great or small, so far as it goes, it should be general.” And again, “If our lives admit of but a short space for reading, all the more reason that, so far as may

¹ ‘The Choice of Books and other Literary Pieces.’ By Frederic Harrison. London, 1886.

be, it should remind us of the vast expanse of human thought, and the wonderful variety of human nature." And yet again:—"Our reading will be sadly one-sided, however voluminous it be, if it entirely close to us any of the great types and ideals which the creative instinct of man has produced, if it shut out from us either the ancient world, or other European poetry, as important almost as our own. When our reading, however deep, runs wholly into 'pockets,' and exhausts itself in the literature of one age, one country, one type, then we may be sure that it is tending to narrow or deform our minds." Yet he talks also of the "systematic reader," the "student of literature," and so forth. It is a little perplexing.

In the essay, or series of essays, which gives its title to the volume, and with which I am for the present mainly concerned, for the rest contenting myself with a humble but sincere welcome to one book which, amid all this busy garnering of barren sheaves, was really worth the making—in that leading essay Mr. Harrison suggests a course of reading for one whom he himself decides to call a General Reader. It is large and generous enough to have satisfied both Gibbon and Macaulay, those great pre-eminent readers who have recorded that they would not exchange their love of books for all the kingdoms of this world and the riches thereof. In brief it may be said to comprise, to use the old familiar phrase, the best of all that has been thought and said in the world, the best in poetry, philosophy, history, fiction—and the best only.

"To put out of the question that writing which is positively bad, are we not, amidst the multiplicity of books and of writers, in continual danger of being drawn off by what is stimulating rather than solid, by curiosity after something accidentally notorious, by what has no intelligible thing to recommend it except that it is new? Now, to stuff our minds with what is

simply trivial, simply curious, or that which at best has but a low nutritive power, this is to close our minds to what is solid and enlarging, and spiritually sustaining. Whether our neglect of the great books comes from our not reading at all, or from an incorrigible habit of reading the little books, it ends in just the same thing. And that thing is ignorance of all the greater literature of the world. To neglect all the abiding parts of knowledge for the sake of the evanescent parts is really to know nothing worth knowing. It is in the end the same, whether we do not use our minds for serious study at all, or whether we exhaust them by an impotent voracity for desultory 'information'—a thing as fruitful as whistling. Of the two evils, I prefer the former. At least, in that case, the mind is healthy and open. It is not gorged and enfeebled by excess in that which cannot nourish much less enlarge and beautify our nature."

Now if the General Reader be one habitually trained on such nourishing diet, so stimulating surely as well as solid, an editor would certainly be right to reject my chapter from the lives of the washerwomen of England, or my essay on Milton's three mothers-in-law, deduced from his behaviour to his three wives (Mr. Harrison has suggested these subjects to me), as unlikely to interest an intelligence so formed. But how about my thoughtful and scholarly article (one of the editors who rejected it gave it this praise) on the literature of the Ojibeways, or that other one on the lost Decades of Livy?

We may take Macaulay, I suppose, as a pretty good type of a general reader. Byron, to be sure, must have been no bad one, if the list of books he had read when he was nineteen (including, to his regret, so he says, four thousand novels!—one would hardly have thought so many had been written in the year 1807) be a true one—which, as it rests only on his own word, it possibly was not. For.

though Mr. Ruskin has praised him for the "measured and living truth" of his poetry, it is pretty certain that he had a knack of economising that valuable gift in his more personal moments. I do not know that any one has yet included this economy in the enormous catalogue of crimes the present age has discovered in Macaulay. He may (or he may not) have strayed beyond the strict bounds of fact in his public writings; but in the outpourings of his private pen it must be clear, even to the most jaundiced eye, that he did not. "I am always glad to make my little girl happy," he writes to his niece Margaret, "and nothing pleases me so much as to see that she likes books. For when she is as old as I am she will find that they are better than all the tarts, and cakes, and toys, and plays, and sights in the world. If anybody would make me the greatest king that ever lived, with palaces, and gardens, and fine dinners, and wine, and coaches, and beautiful clothes, and hundreds of servants, on condition that I would not read books, I would not be a king. I would rather be a poor man in a garret with plenty of books than a king who did not love reading." Who can doubt him?

Now, Mr. Harrison's theory is that every time one reads a bad book—a book, that is to say, not truly instructive, not formative—so much is taken from our power of recognizing and appreciating a good one. His list is, let me say again, sufficiently catholic, and should one fancies be found not altogether wanting even by those steadily inclined not to be serious. Shakespeare and Molière, 'Don Quixote' and 'The Vicar of Wakefield,' 'The Arabian Nights' (not the new Revalenta Arabica of Captain Burton), 'Tom Jones' and 'Clarissa Harlowe,' 'Vanity Fair' and 'Pickwick,' and all Sir Walter Scott—for which last Mr. Harrison may be forgiven for suggesting immortality to 'The Last Days of Pompeii' and 'Middlemarch'—in

such a list some comfort may surely be found by those who shake their heads at Homer and Virgil, Dante and Milton, or, like Mr. James Smiley's friend, can see no point in the 'Frogs' of Aristophanes.

Macaulay read these books, not once but many times. An insatiable reader he was, if man ever was, but he was not one of those justly banned by Mr. Harrison who "have read all these household books many years ago, read them, and judged them, and put them away for ever." He had soaked himself in them; their happy thoughts and golden phrases came flowing in unfailling streams to his lips as he talked, to his pen as he wrote. His memory, some have said who heard him talk, was prodigious, but a prodigious nuisance. How that may have been we, who never heard him talk, cannot tell; but Charles Greville, who spoke well of few men, at least did not think so. His memory, to us who can only read him, is certainly no nuisance. What General Reader does not remember that 'Roundabout Paper' in which Thackeray did ample and gracious penance for what was after all but a jest of his frolic time? Who knows not his picture of Macaulay pacing up and down the library of the Athenæum, glorifying with his splashes of imperial purple the milk-white virtues of 'Clarissa'? "I daresay," writes his amused admiring hearer, "he could have spoken pages of the book—of that book, and of what countless piles of others!"

Countless, indeed!—and of others Mr. Harrison certainly would not suffer in his list. "His intimate acquaintance with a work," writes Mr. Trevelyan, "was no proof of its merit." And then he goes on to tell us, on his mother's authority, some of the works his uncle was intimately acquainted with; the romances of Mrs. Meeke and of Mrs. Kitty Cuthbertson, 'Santo Sebastiano, or the Young Protector,' 'Adelaide, or the Countercharm,' 'The Romance of the Pyrenees,' and so forth. The first of these

literary treasures was once sold at an auction, and Macaulay, bidding against Miss Eden, became its happy possessor at a fabulous price. How carefully he had studied it is proved by an elaborate computation on the last page of the number of fainting-fits that occur in the course of the five volumes—for those were the days when men liked their little long. Of these aberrations of the soul there were twenty-seven in all, no less than eleven well-defined and separate swoons falling to the share of the heroine. "The day on which he detected, in the darkest recesses of a Holborn book-stall, some trumpery romance that had been in the Cambridge circulating libraries of the year 1820, was a date marked with a white stone in his calendar. He exults in his diary over the discovery of a wretched novel called 'Conscience,' which he himself confesses to be 'execrable trash,' as triumphantly as if it had been a first folio edition of Shakespeare with an inch and a half of margin." He spent part of the summer of 1853 at Tunbridge Wells, a place familiar and well-loved in his youth, and he notes with delight how he discovered in a corner of Nash's reading-room, "Sally More's novel, unseen since 1816." After a debauch on the 'Republic' in the same summer, he could turn to the 'Mystères de Paris,' and vow that Sue had "quite put poor Plato's nose out of joint." In 1851 he wrote to Ellis from Malvern that he missed him much, but consoled himself as well as he could with Demosthenes, Goethe, Lord Campbell, and Miss Ferrier.

But this omnivorous appetite did not destroy Macaulay's appreciation of the finer and more nourishing kinds of intellectual food. He got no pleasure from books, he confesses, equal to that of "reading over for the hundredth time great productions which I know almost by heart." When at Malvern he tells Ellis that he read at one stretch fourteen books of the 'Odyssey,' walking to Worcester and back. And again, in his diary:—

"I walked far into Herefordshire, and read, while walking, the last five books of the 'Iliad,' with deep interest and many tears. I was afraid to be seen crying by the parties of walkers that met me as I came back, crying for Achilles cutting off his hair, crying for Priam rolling on the ground in the courtyard of his house; mere imaginary beings, creatures of an old ballad-maker who died near three thousand years ago." He had Herodotus's account of the battle of Marathon by heart, and Thucydides's account of the siege of Syracuse: Cicero, we are told, was as real to him as Peel, and Curio as Stanley: he could not read the 'De Coronâ' even for the twentieth time "without striking his clenched fist at least once a minute on the arm of his easy-chair." With the literature of modern languages, too, he was no less familiar; and lest those who may hold with Ensign Northerton concerning the masters of the old world should turn in disgust from the specimens here given of Macaulay's reading, let it be added that he was as familiar with his 'Pickwick' as with his 'Clarissa.'

But this, some one will say, was an exceptional man: what was sport to his, would have been death to the brain of any other man. Well, certainly the brains of Macaulay are not found in every skull. But, one cannot but ask, must not Mr. Harrison's General Reader be something also of an exception? will not he, too, have a strain of the black swan in him?

To read the best in literature; to read it always, and to read it only. Wise counsel; but who shall fulfil it? Does not such an education pre-suppose a condition of mind and fortune—one might almost say, too, of body—rare indeed in this much-harassed age, if possible at all? A monk of the Thebaid, Saint Simeon on his pillar, that sage, "hoar-headed, wrinkled, clad in white," who for ever, in Mr. Arnold's beautiful lines, ponders God's mysteries amid the eternal snows of the Himalayas—for such happy

beings conditions such as Mr. Harrison presupposes for his ideal reader might have been possible; or possible in nearer, but yet as vanished times they might have been, when our universities were truly homes of learning, cities of refuge, unvexed by the storms that raged outside their happy grounds, before they set themselves to catch and reproduce some feeble echoes of those empty tempests. But where, for whom, is such a life possible now? We must all be up and doing: with heavy hearts or light we must all

"into the world and wave of men depart."

Even the most futile can get seats in Parliament—and do. The scanty moments most of us can spare to literature must be given to the newspaper, or to the last popular novel or treatise on irreligion, taken as an anodyne before bed-time. With our nerves always at high pressure, and our brains distraught with the multiplicity of trifles which make up the sum of most lives, how can we set ourselves in order to listen to the great voices echoing from

"the mountain-tops where is the home of truth"?

Mr. Harrison admits that to seek the company of these immortals as one would chat with a pleasant friend over a cigar is a vain thing. "When," he asks, "when will men understand that the reading of great books is a faculty to be acquired, not a natural gift, at least not to those who are spoiled by our current education and habits of life?" They need a certain freedom of mind, a clearness of brain, and perhaps a certain austerity of mood, to be properly read. The palate must be clean to taste them truly, as they were wines of some rare vintage. Charles Lamb declared that Milton almost required "a solemn service of music to be played before you enter upon him. But he brings his music, to which who listens had need bring ocile thoughts and purged ears." He also vowed that he had once

soothed a melancholy night with a pipe of tobacco, a bottle of port, and 'King Lear'; at least, he told Coleridge he had done so: but one cannot help speculating on the share each of these anodynes contributed to the net result. In any frame of mind I doubt whether port-wine and tobacco could be the most convenient adornments for 'King Lear,' though they might serve as a pretty relish for the humours of Falstaff. Even those who can, and do, give more time to literature—especially those who must, as the author of 'Lacon' says, read a little to write—cannot be always in trim for the best, and the best only. To force oneself to read this great solid best when one really craves something a little less good, a little lighter, more easy of digestion, as it were, is a far worse thing than to keep always from it. The brain, I take it, is much as the stomach. When a man has come to the years of discretion—the phrase is perhaps more current than certain, but let it pass—if he does not know what to eat, drink, and avoid according to his condition and habit, not all the doctors in the world will help him. There is not one universal stomach; nay, has not one man many stomachs? What is good for him to-day may not be good for him to-morrow. That is why these rules for diet so much in vogue just at present are really such supreme nonsense, as none, let us fervently hope for the credit of the Faculty, know better than the doctors themselves. And it is much the same, I take it, with books and reading. The real secret is to know what fare the intellectual stomach needs at the moment. "A man," said Samuel Johnson, "ought to read just as inclination leads him; for what he reads as a task will do him little good." "I read," wrote Macaulay in his journal, "Henderson's 'Iceland' at breakfast; a favourite breakfast book with me. Why? How oddly we are made! Some books which I never should dream of opening at

dinner please me at breakfast, and *vice versa*." "Much," said Lamb, "depends upon *when* and *where* you read a book. In the five or six impatient minutes before the dinner is quite ready, who would think of taking up the 'Fairy Queen' for a stop-gap, or a volume of Bishop Andrewes's sermons?" Why put all your poor intellects out of joint striving to keep pace with Plato through the realms of thought, when what would really soothe your tired brain, and send you to bed at peace with yourself and the world, would be—and you know it—Mr. Burnand's 'Happy Thoughts'? Why break your brains over 'Paradise Lost,' when you are yearning, more fervently than ever Mrs. Blimber yearned to see Cicero in the flesh, for the 'Ingoldsby Legends'? Neither Milton nor Plato will do you any good in those conditions, any more than cold water will do you good if you are sick of a fever, or the pantomime at the Lyceum give you any idea of Goethe's 'Faust.'

In a little book, most useful to all readers, whether they read to think, to write, or to talk, in the 'Book-lover's Eachiridion,' is a passage so much to the purpose that I cannot but quote it, at the risk of incurring De Quincey's malison on those who "benefit too much by quotations;" and I do so with the more confidence as it is from a writer unfamiliar, I suspect, to most of us: the most general reader has not impossibly excluded Dr. Channing from his course of "chewing"—so Mr. Harrison calls it; but you must chew to digest. He says—Dr. Channing, I mean:—

"The best books for a man are not always those which the wise recommend, but oftener those which meet the peculiar wants, the natural thirst of his mind, and therefore awaken interest and rivet thought. And here it may be well to observe, not only in regard to books, but in other respects, that self-culture must vary with the individual. All means do not equally

suit us all. A man must unfold himself freely, and should respect the peculiar gifts or biasses by which nature has distinguished him from others. Self-culture does not demand the sacrifice of individuality, it does not regularly apply an established machinery, for the sake of torturing every man into one rigid shape, called perfection. As the human countenance, with the same features in us all, is diversified without end in the race, and is never the same in any two individuals, so the human soul, with the same grand powers and law, expands into an infinite variety of forms, and would be woefully stunted by modes of culture requiring all men to learn the same lesson, or to bend to the same rules."

I confess I think Mr. Harrison is a little too austere. Certainly a man who habitually passes his leisure in reading the police reports in the newspapers, or the speeches in the House of Commons, or dirty French novels, will not be likely to have much stomach for Homer, or Dante, or Milton, or Walter Scott. But I do think that there is a deal of literature—of reading, at any rate—beyond Mr. Harrison's circle that could do a man no harm, and as soothing, lightening, gilding the dark and heavy hours may even be said to do good. Mr. Ruskin said many years ago that he admitted no poetry but the very best, and then tells us that we had better read Cary's translation from Dante than 'Paradise Lost.' Mr. Harrison, at any rate, writes no nonsense; and on one side he warns us against expecting too much from his system of education.

"In the first place," he says, "when we speak about books, let us avoid the extravagance of expecting too much from books, the pedant's habit of extolling books as synonymous with education. Books are no more education than laws are virtue; and just as profligacy is easy within the strict limits of law, a boundless knowledge of books may be found with a narrow education. A man may be, as the

poet says, 'deep versed in books, and shallow in himself.' We need to know in order that we may feel rightly and act wisely. The thirst after truth itself may be pushed to a degree where indulgence enfeebles our sympathies and unnerves us in action. Of all men perhaps the book-lover needs most to be reminded that man's business here is to know for the sake of living, not to live for the sake of knowing."

No one, I think, has ever written more wisely or more temperately on this subject than Mr. Harrison; and it is a subject on which so much intemperate foolishness has been written. To that foolishness I have no desire voluntarily to contribute. What shall be taken, and what left, I make no pretence to decide. Whether a man, or a woman, prefer Sir Arthur Helps to Marcus Aurelius, or Buddha to both, matters nothing to me. Let this man, if he chooses, place George Eliot by the side of Shakespeare; I am sure Shakespeare, in his infinite courtesy, will gladly go up higher to make room for her. The "windy aspirations of forced breath" Mr. Swinburne delights to blow against Byron do not irritate me as they seem to irritate so many pious souls. One supposes them to please Mr. Swinburne, and certainly they do no manner of harm to Byron. But I cannot see why we should not read everything that is good after its kind, and enjoy them all, each according to its kind. Lord Steyne was famous among epicures for his French cook and his cellar; yet he could dine off a boiled leg of mutton and turnips, and find that it was good. That, I submit, is the proper spirit for your true reader.

And so, it seems to me, I say again, that Mr. Harrison has written a little too austerely. He has, I think, fenced and bounded his subject round a little too rigidly; he has made the way more perilous still to those

"dragon-warded fountains
Where the springs of knowledge are."

Must a man enjoy his Homer and his Virgil one whit the less because he can read with pleasure for the hundredth time his 'Lays of Ancient Rome' or his 'Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers'? Can he not love Keats without loathing Pope? Must he be incapable of appreciating the fun of Socrates discoursing philosophy from his basket, or Bacchus tugging at Charon's oar, because he can laugh consumedly at Lord Scamperdale or Mr. Verdant Green? I have read 'Don Quixote' and 'Robinson Crusoe' and 'The Pilgrim's Progress' many times and hope to read them many times again: whether I truly appreciate them I cannot say, but I can honestly say that I like to read them. But I also read again the other day, after some lapse of time, Mr. Wilkie Collins's 'Woman in White' and 'Moonstone,' and I must honestly say I enjoyed them both immensely. There are hours when I would sooner read certain chapters of 'Westward Ho!' than any other book that ever came from a printing-press. The other day I read a list of books drawn up by a lady for the edification of Sir John Lubbock's ideal working man; this list included Epictetus and Boethius and St. François de Sales's 'Traité de l'Amour de Dieu,' and Rousseau's 'Confessions'—the last perhaps a rather queer sort of book for a gentlewoman to recommend to a working man. But surely no one will say that this erudite lady is less able to appreciate her Boethius because she has thumbed her Rousseau?

So long as our whims be not dangerous, do not lead us to the books which promote "filthiness and foolish talking," we may be content to read, I do think, as the whim seizes us; browsing at will, snatching a mouthful here and a mouthful there of such food as we have a mind for, and then, when the spirit is on us, sitting down to a real banquet with the immortals. There have been men, wise men, full men, who have learned much by this intermittent grazing, these half-hours

not always with the best authors, and have counselled others to go and do so likewise. Come what come may, at least these odd half-hours will be better spent dipping into the books themselves than in taking the edge off such little appetites as nature may have granted us by cramming ourselves with a thousand different opinions about them. Against that vile practice, indeed, the face of Mr. Harrison is set most sternly. "We read a perfect library about the 'Paradise Lost,' but the 'Paradise Lost' itself we do not read. . . A perpetual chatter about books chokes the seed which is sown in the greatest books of the world." It is, to be sure, no new practice, not particular to this age. More than a century ago the author of 'The Library' had something to say on it.

"Our nicer palates higher labours seek,
Cloy'd with a folio-*Number* once a week;
Bibles, with cuts and comments, thus go
down:
E'en light Voltaire is *number'd* through the
town:
Thus physic flies abroad, and thus the law,
From men of study and from men of straw;
Abstracts, abridgments, please the fickle
times,
Pamphlets and plays, and politics and
rhymes."

And Pope, as one or two may still remember, shot an arrow at the same mark before Crabbe.

Mr. Harrison says:—"The true use of books is of such sacred value to us that to be simply entertained is to

cease to be taught, elevated, inspired by books; merely to gather information of a chance kind is to close the mind to knowledge of the urgent kind." Surely not: surely a wholesome and cleanly entertainment is in certain moods, and to certain spirits, itself a teaching, an elevation; surely information, even of a chance kind, if it be good information, is no bad thing. Even if not fruit-bearing, to use Bacon's phrase, it may be light-bringing. I own I rather hold with another bit of counsel from Crabbe than with such stern prescriptions.

"Go on! and, while the sons of care complain,
Be wisely gay and innocently vain;
While serious souls are by their fears undone,
Blow sportive bladders in the beamy sun."

We cannot all, at all hours, breathe the finer air of the highest heaven: happy he who can, but he who cannot need surely not despair. The lower earth has its seasons of fruitfulness, which are not always seasons of mist. A change of diet is wholesome for us who are compact of commoner clay. "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes strong drink; lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted. Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more."

A COSSACK POET.

I PROPOSE in the following pages to introduce to the notice of my readers a poet whose name has hardly been heard in the western parts of Europe. This is the Cossack Taras Shevchenko, whose funeral in 1861 was followed by so many thousands of his countrymen, and whose grave—a tumulus surmounted by a large iron cross, near Kaniov on the Dnieper—has been called the Mecca of the South Russian revolutionists. Schevchenko has become the national poet of the Malo-Russians, a large division of the Slavonic family amounting to ten millions, and speaking what has been called a Russian dialect, but is more justly styled by Micklosich and other eminent Slavists an independent language. The object of my little sketch is not philological, so that I shall only dwell upon such points so far as to enable my readers to form a correct idea what the Malo-Russian language is, and where it is spoken. I shall give a notion of its area if I say that drawing a straight line from Sandech, near Cracow, to the Asiatic frontier of Russia, we shall find this language the dominant tongue of Galicia and all the southern parts of Russia, till we come to the Caucasus. It is even spoken in a thin strip of territory in the north of Hungary. It has a rich collection of legendary poems, tales and folk-songs, but its written and artificial literature only dates from the end of last century. When we look at the part of Europe where the language is spoken, we might reasonably expect to find in the surroundings a great deal to stimulate a national poet. These broad steppes form one of the cockpits of Europe. Here Turk, Russian, Pole, Tartar, and Rouman have met in many a deadly contest. On the islands of the Dnieper were the settlements

of the strange Cossack Republic, the *Setch*, which cost Peter the Great and Catherine the Second so much trouble to break up; here were the battle-grounds of the celebrated Bogdan Khmelnitzki in his long struggles against the Polish *pans*. Over these steppes the Tartars used to drive their numerous herds of prisoners of all ages and both sexes to the slave-markets. Such a country is sure not to want its *vates sacer*; but if he will sing of it as a real son of his country, he will not tell of delicate-handed dealings; he will talk more of the shedding of blood than the sprinkling of rose-water. Schevchenko has left us an autobiography, though but a meagre one; and it is from this, which is included in the editions of his works published at Lemberg and Prague, that I shall chiefly take my sketch. To the two handsome volumes which appeared at Prague in 1876 is prefixed the portrait of the poet, with his Cossack cap. It is a manly, expressive face, though somewhat rough, and with care deeply stamped upon it; but we shall not be surprised at this when we make a closer acquaintance with his fortunes. Tourgueniev tells us that he had a heavy look till he became animated; and one of his friends humorously styled him “a wild boar with a lark in his throat.”

Shevchenko was born on the ninth of March, 1814, in the village of Mornitza, near Kerelivka, in the government of Kiev. His parents were serfs on the estate of a Russian nobleman of German extraction named Engelhardt. His troubles began in earliest childhood. In 1823 he lost his mother, and on his father's marrying again he was doomed to experience the cruelties of a stepmother. Tarras wandered about the village, a neglected bare-

footed urchin, with his little sister Irene for his sole companion. The elder Shevchenko only survived his second marriage two years, and then the orphan was sent to be instructed by a drunken priest named Buhorski, who treated him with great brutality. "This was the first despot I ever had to deal with," says Taras in his autobiography, "and he instilled in me for the rest of my life a loathing for every act of oppression which one man can commit against another." He has tales to tell us about two other preceptors of the same sort, from whom he also learned something of the art of painting; for, in addition to the instruction of children both of his masters were engaged in the trade of preparing sacred *icons*, or representations of saints for churches. Thus an inclination for art was produced in him besides his in-born propensity for poetry.

In this way Shevchenko spent a considerable part of his early youth; but in 1829 his master Engelhardt died, and his son-and-heir took the youngster as a page. This new post, although it seemed at first to abridge his liberty, was in the end advantageous to him. His duty was to remain in his master's ante-chamber and answer his call. He began to amuse himself by copying the pictures hanging on the walls, a practice, however, which on one occasion led to very unpleasant results. He had accompanied his master to Vilna, on the occasion of a festival in honour of the Tzar. A grand ball was given at which most of the Engelhardt family were present. While the rest of the household slept, the young artist rose secretly, lit a candle, and began copying a portrait of Platov, the well-known hetman of the Cossacks, who visited England with the Allied Sovereigns in 1814. Shevchenko became so engrossed in this occupation that he did not perceive the return of his master, till he was rudely awakened from his artistic studies by having his ears pulled by the angry nobleman, who reminded his careless serf that by sitting with a candle among the

papers he had almost set the house on fire. He received a beating at the time, and on the following day a severer castigation by his masters' orders.

Better days, however, were in store for him. M. Engelhardt, seeing in what direction his talents lay, resolved to send him to a house-painter and decorator, with a view to employing him in those capacities on his own estate. To a painter of this sort he was accordingly sent, and luckily found a kind-hearted man, who, seeing how superior his apprentice was to such work, recommended his master to put him under a certain Lampi, at that time a portrait-painter of some reputation at Warsaw. Consent was given to this step, but the youth remained unhappy and restless, and, according to one of his biographers, was on the point of committing suicide. In the year 1832 the Engelhardts removed permanently to St. Petersburg, and the poet followed with the rest of the servants. He was now eighteen years of age, and at his earnest request was put under the care of another painter, who was, however, little better than a house-decorator. But his mind developed in the capital. On holidays he used to visit the picture galleries, and a longing seized him to imitate the great masters whose works he saw exhibited there. By good luck he made the acquaintance of the artist Soshenko, who felt especial sympathy with him, as being a native of the same part of Russia. By the advice of his new friend he began to work in water-colours. His success in this branch of art was so great that his master used to employ him to paint the portraits of his friends, and rewarded him for so doing. Soshenko assisted him in his work, and laboured also for his moral and intellectual progress, introducing him to the Malo-Russian novelist Grebenka. These worthy men between them succeeded in purchasing the freedom of the poor artist. The celebrated Broulov painted a portrait of the poet

Zhoukovski, then one of the most popular men in Russia. The picture was sold for twenty-five hundred roubles at a lottery and for this sum his master Engelhardt gave him his freedom.

This was in April, 1838, and Shevchenko at once became a member of the Academy of Arts. A successful career seemed now to lie open before him. A fondness for poetry had developed itself in him as early as his love of art. His surviving friends still speak of his enthusiasm for the songs of his country, and the tenderness and pathos with which he was in the habit of singing them. In 1840 appeared his '*Kobzar*,'¹ containing a collection of lyrical pieces in the Little or Malo-Russian language. In the following year were published the '*Haidamaks*' and '*Hamalia*.' These poems were received with great enthusiasm by the South Russians, and made the name of the poet deservedly celebrated among his countrymen. The Ukraine and the surrounding lands have always been the most poetic region of Russia, and have been celebrated not only by the authors who have used the national language, but also by the so-called Ukraine school of Polish poets, including Zaleski, Malczewski, Goszcrynski, Padura, Slowacki, and others. Soon after the poet visited his native province, and there made the acquaintance of Koulisch and Kostomarov. The former of these writers was well known throughout Russia for his sympathies with the language and literature of the Ukraine. He is the author of some excellent works on the subject, but from a recent publication his opinions seem to have undergone a great change. Kostomarov died in the earlier part of the present year, having left a considerable reputation as a worker in the field of history and the author of many valuable monographs

on Russian celebrities. But these friendships led to some serious troubles. The three men were of advanced political opinions, and were so indiscreet as to give utterance to them. At some meetings in the house of Artemovski Goulak, a Malo-Russian author, their unguarded utterances were heard by a student of the University of Kiev, who undertook the degrading office of an informer.² This, we must remember, occurred under the iron rule of the Emperor Nicholas; but there is also a story that the poet composed some biting epigrams on members of the Imperial family.

The companions of his indiscretion were hurried off to imprisonment and exile in separate places. Shevchenko was sentenced to serve as a common soldier, at Orenburg on the Asiatic frontier of the empire. This banishment he endured for ten years, from 1847 to 1857. He has told us of his sufferings in many of his lyrical pieces. From Orenburg he was removed to Siberia, and afterwards to the Fort of Novopetrovsk on the Asiatic coast of the Caspian Sea. His punishment was rendered more severe because he was forbidden to draw or paint. He continued, however, to secrete materials for the exercise of his favourite art, even carrying a pencil in his shoe; and the good-natured officer in command winked at these breaches of discipline. The following story is told by Tourgueniev in the interesting recollections which he has furnished to the Prague edition of the poet's works:—

"One general, an out-and-out martinet, having heard that Shevchenko, in spite of the prohibition, had made two or three sketches, thought it his duty to report the matter to Perovski (the commander-in-chief of the district) on one of his days of reception; but the latter, looking sternly on the overzealous informer, said in a marked

¹ The *kobzar* is a wandering minstrel among the Malo-Russians, who accompanies his song with a kind of guitar, called *kobza*.

² So Professor Partitzki, of Lemberg, tells us in his suggestive little work in the Malo-Russian language, '*The Leading Ideas in the Writings of Taras Shevchenko*,' p. 18.

tone, 'General, I am deaf in this ear; be so good as to repeat to me on the other side what you have said.' The general took the hint, and going to the other ear told him something which in no way concerned Shevchenko."

The poor poet lamented his captivity in many pathetic poems. In one, addressed to his friend Kozachovski, he speaks of "often bedewing his couch with tears of blood." But a day of deliverance was at hand. In 1855 the Emperor Nicholas died. Up to that time the only alleviation of Shevchenko's treatment had been when he was allowed to accompany as draftsman through part of Siberia the expedition under Lieutenant Boutakov. A year or so before the end of his captivity his treatment became more gentle; and at last came his release, owing to the efforts of Count Feodore Tolstoi and his wife, whom Shevchenko ever afterwards reckoned among his greatest benefactors. There was some delay, however, before he received his freedom. He was detained several months at Nizhni-Novgorod, and sold a few drawings there for his maintenance. He did not return to St. Petersburg till April, 1858. In the summer of 1859 he paid a visit to the Ukraine, and saw his sister Irene in his native village; but he was so poor that he was only able to give her a rouble. At that time all the surviving members of his family were serfs; but in 1860 they received their freedom to the number of eleven souls, owing to the efforts of a society established to assist poor authors and their families. The emancipation of the serfs throughout Russia by the *oukaze* of Alexander the Second was to follow in the next year. The poverty of Shevchenko, indeed, continued till the end of his days, but in truth he was, as is popularly supposed to be the way of poets, remarkably careless of his money. We are told that when he had taken lodgings with a friend he would frequently hand

over his purse to him, leaving him to make all arrangements for their common wants. Taras had now a fixed plan of settling in the Ukraine. He wished to purchase a cottage and a little piece of land within sight of the Dnieper, but he was not destined to have his wishes fulfilled. Towards the middle of July he again made his appearance at St. Petersburg, and a new edition of his '*Kobzar*' was published, which was very favourably received. At this time he had chambers in the Academy buildings, and occupied himself with engraving. He now resolved to marry, and his choice fell upon a peasant girl, in spite of the remonstrances of his friends, who reminded him that he was a man of talent and culture. His answer was characteristic: "In body and in soul I am a son and brother of our despised common people. How, then, can I unite myself to one of aristocratic blood? And what would a proud, luxurious lady do in my humble cottage?" In pursuance of this plan he successively endeavoured to gain the affections of two women in humble life, named Charita and Glukeria, but in neither case was he successful: preparations were indeed made for his marriage with the latter, but the girl herself broke off the engagement. According to the testimony of his friends, Shevchenko rarely visited the houses of those who were in a social station superior to his own. He had a natural dread of being patronised, and conducted himself in a reserved and haughty manner. In the appreciative circles of a few private friends he appeared in his native strength, told amusing anecdotes, and sang some of the songs of the Ukraine in a pathetic and impressive manner.

After the failure of his second attempt at marriage, he became more than ever anxious to get away from his lonely life in St. Petersburg, and purchased a piece of land on the right bank of the Dnieper near Kaniov. His health, once so vigorous, now began to show signs of breaking up,

owing to his long sufferings both in early youth and in his Siberian exile, and, it must also be added, to an unfortunate habit of drinking. But even in the last days of his life he was labouring for his country, being busy in writing books to assist popular education in the Little-Russian language; of these, one, a grammar, was published during his life; the others, works on arithmetic, geography, and history, were never finished. In January, 1861, Shevchenko wrote to his brother Bartholomew: "I have begun this year very badly; for two weeks I have not stirred out of the house. I feel debilitated and cough continually." A fortnight afterwards he said: "I feel so ill that I can hardly hold the pen in my hand." On his birthday, although very weak, he was cheered by telegrams from his countrymen in the Ukraine, who regarded him with enthusiastic affection. He received their messages on the ninth of March, and encouraged by their warm expressions of sympathy he talked cheerfully with his companions, and expressed a hope that he might get to the south, where he felt sure that his health would be restored. On the following day, March the tenth, he rose at five o'clock in the morning and went to his studio, but suddenly fell down and in about an hour breathed his last. Two days afterwards he was buried in the Smolensk cemetery at St. Petersburg, where every Sunday his grave was visited by the Southern Russians residing in that city. But this was only to be the temporary resting-place of the poet. In one of his poems he had expressed a wish to be buried in the Ukraine—

"When I am dead
Bury me in a grave,
Amidst the broad steppe
In my beloved Ukraine!

That I may see the wide-extending meadows
And the Dnieper and its bank,
And hear the roaring river
As it eddies onward."

This wish was to be granted. His body was disinterred and conveyed

south. It was received everywhere with all possible honour and, carried through the city of Kiev by the students of the university, was laid at last in a picturesque spot on the banks of the Dnieper in the presence of a great concourse of people. A vast mound of earth was piled on the grave, surmounted by an iron cross. In a recent number of the Russian magazine, 'Historical Messenger,' an account is given of the present condition of the "Hill of Taras" (*Tarasova Gora*) as it is called. The grave has been inclosed with iron railings; at the basement of the cross is a medallion of the poet, with his name and the date of his birth and death.

Shevchenko is pre-eminently the national poet of the Southern Russians, a title he has well earned by his intense national feeling. I can only hope in a short sketch like the present to give a general idea of the characteristics of his genius. His verse loses much of its native simplicity in translation, and if a version be attempted it ought to be made in Lowland Scotch. He loves to describe the wild lives of the Cossacks in their old independent days, before the *setch* had been gradually reduced to insignificance by Peter the Great and Catherine; and in the stirring poem known as 'The Haidamaks,'¹ their revolt in 1768 under Gonta and Zelezniak against their Polish masters is described at length.

Another fine poem, too, is that devoted to the celebrated hetman² Ivan Podkova, or in the Malo-Russian form *pidkova*, lit., a horseshoe—a name which this redoubtable chief

¹ This word is explained by Miklosich, 'Die Türkischen Elemente in den Südost- und Osteuropäischen Sprachen,' as, originally a cattle-driver, but it has come to mean little more than a wandering Cossack; sometimes, however, it is used with a bad signification, as a robber, or the Scotch land-louper.

² The word *hetman* is none other than the German *hauptmann*, which has got through Polish into Little-Russian. It has become in Russian *ataman*.

is said to have gained from his skill in crumpling up a horseshoe by a mere twist of the hand. Having broken out into rebellion he was executed by order of Stephen Batory. But it is not only in these longer pieces, devoted to deeds of the Cossack heroes, that Shevchenko shines. He has many short lyrical pieces of great pathos and elegance which almost defy translation. It would be merely *du clair du lune empaillé*, as, quoting the words of *Gérald de Nerval*, *M. Durand* says in his valuable article on the poet contributed to the '*Revue des deux Mondes*' (1876, vol. iii. p. 919). This, by the way, and a longer sketch in German published by *Obrist* at *Czernowitz*, are the only attempts which have been hitherto made to introduce this interesting poet to Western readers.

Shevchenko has, in a clever way, interwoven with his poems the popular superstitions and customs of his countrymen; and this probably explains the great charm which they have for all Southern Russians, by whom his memory is regarded with idolatry. Moreover no poet was ever more autobiographical; he is always giving us details of his sad but interesting life. He writes for the most part in short unrhymed metres; the well-marked accent of the Little-Russian language amply supplying the place of rhyme, which, however, he sometimes employs, though more frequently contenting himself with a mere assonance. There is a wonderful spontaneity in his verse; and despite his careless, unfettered style, there is always the truest agreement between the language and meaning, while in the most graphic passages the lines seem to rush on headlong. Sometimes we have the strangest and most powerful onomatopœia, as in the poem '*Outopleua*' (the drowned woman), where we seem to hear the wind howling among the reeds, and asking, as it were, what melancholy figure sits upon the bank. In the '*Night of Taras*' (*Tarasova*

Nich) the poet sings a fine elegy on the past glories of his country.

He has perfectly caught the spirit of the little Russian folk-songs, and reproduces them as faithfully as Burns did the Scottish. Their superstitions about birds, water-nymphs, magic herbs, and other weird beliefs, are freely introduced. Thus ravens, as in Serbian poetry, bring intelligence of a disaster; the falcon is the favourite bird with which a young man is compared; and the cuckoo is a prophet. It is not a little curious to find tales of magic handkerchiefs, such as that which *Othello* gave to *Desdemona*—

" there's magic in the web of it;
A sibyl, that had numbered in the world
The sun to course two hundred compasses,
In her prophetic fury sew'd the work."

It has sometimes occurred to me that the superstition might have got into the Italian story upon which Shakespeare based his noble play from Slavonic sources. Close to Venice is the Dalmatian littoral, with its Slavonic population and traditions of Ragusa and the Ragusan school, which produced some of the most celebrated poets of the South Slavonic peoples.

The belief also is widely spread that human beings are changed into trees. In one lay the poet tells us a tale of two poplars, which were once sisters and enchantresses (*sestri-charivnitzî*), who both fell in love with the same person, a certain Ivan. There is also a belief in the existence of the evil eyes and of love potions. The favourite plant of the Little-Russians is the elder tree, which has a thousand magic virtues. The following little poem is so pathetic that, even in a prose version, it may perhaps give some idea of Shevchenko's manner in the minor pieces:—

"Here three broad ways cross, and here three brothers of the Ukraine parted on their several journeys. They left their aged mother. This one quitted a wife, the other a sister, and the third, the youngest, a sweetheart. The aged mother planted three ashes in a field, and the wife planted a tall poplar; the sister three maples in the dell, and the betrothed maiden a red elder tree. The three ashes threw not,

the poplar withered ; withered also the maples, and the elder faded. Never more came the brothers. The old mother is weeping, and the wife, with the children, wails in the cheerless cottage. The sister mourns and goes to seek her brothers in the far-away lands ; the young maiden is laid in her grave. The brothers come not back : they are wandering over the world ; and the three pathways, they are overgrown with thorns."

Or let us take this pretty little idyl, which loses, perhaps, even more by translation :—

"There is a garden of cherry-trees round the cottage, and the insects are humming near them. It is the time when the labourers are coming in with their ploughs, the maidens sing as they enter, and the mothers await them all for supper. The family take their meal about the cottage, the evening glow arises in the sky, the daughter gives the meal to each, and the mother would fain be advising her, but the nightingale hinders it by her singing. The mother has laid her little children to sleep in the cottage, and herself rests by them. All is hushed—only the maiden and the nightingale do not sleep."

And these opening stanzas of the lament of a lonely girl have not a little of the manner of Burns in them:—

"Alas I am solitary, solitary like a patch of weeds in a field : God has given me neither happiness nor good fortune. He has only given me beauty and brown eyes, and these I have nearly wept out in my desolate maidenhood."

National poetry, such as proceeds from the hearts of the people and lives in their mouths, is now, thanks to the spread of civilisation and cosmopolitanism, fast disappearing. The conditions of its existence are every day becoming more impossible. Had Shevchenko lived a hundred years ago his lyrics would not have been committed to the printer, but would have been handed on from singer to singer, as was the case with the Scottish ballads 'Sir Patrick Spens,' 'Lord Randal,' and many others, which are now read with astonishment and delight, but whose authors are unknown. In these days of excessive curiosity the popular minstrel is dragged from his rural solitudes, where he sang only to an audience of the surrounding villages, is brought to the great capitals and becomes an object of wonderment. The people of the Ukraine, like the modern Serbs, are not sufficiently near the great centres of Western culture to have exchanged their folk-songs for operatic airs and the conventional lyrics of the music-hall. One of the last genuine minstrels of that interesting part of Russia was Taras Shevchenko.

W. R. MORFILL.

FYVIE CASTLE, AND ITS LAIRDS.

SITUATED in the lowlands of Aberdeenshire, which can hardly be called pretty even by the most enthusiastic Scotchman, the noble old castle of Fyvie has yet some beautiful and picturesque surroundings. Standing on a broad natural esplanade or plateau, its towers and turrets, many of which are crowned with quaint figures and busts carved in the red sandstone of the district, rise above the fine trees of the park; and the whole mass fully deserves Billing's enthusiastic praise in his 'Baronial Antiquities,' where he calls Fyvie "one of the noblest and most beautiful specimens of the rich architecture which the Scottish barons in the days of James the Sixth obtained from France." The small river Ythan flowing round two sides of the castle, its steep hanging banks fringed with wide-spreading trees, must have added considerably to the strength of the place in the fierce old fighting days, when the low-lying meadows all round could be flooded at short notice.

"The jealous trout, that loe do lie,"

abound in the Ythan, which is famed also for its pearl fisheries; the Scotch pearl in the royal crown came out of its clear waters.

Intimately associated with Scottish history, Fyvie in ancient times was a royal hunting seat. It has had many illustrious inmates, and stood several sieges. It has its "murder-room," like the palace of Holyrood; its secret chamber, like Glamis; and a weird Green Ladye who haunts the great staircase, trailing her satin dress and jingling her pearl necklace, when she appears to announce death or disaster to the laird of Fyvie. The mysterious "weeping stone" is still without its two companions, which must be found ere the curse which rests on Fyvie will be broken.

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At an early period of Scotch history Fermartyn was a thanage¹ lying on the eastern seaboard between the rivers Ythan and Don, and formerly part of the demesne lands of the Crown, of which the castle of Fyvie was the chief messuage. It is now, under the name of Formartine, one of the districts of the county of Aberdeen. Alexander the Second of Scotland dates a charter, confirming the church of Buthelny (Meldrum) to the monks of St. Thomas of Arbroath, from Fyvin on the twenty-second of February, 1221. The annual value of the estate in the reign of his successor Alexander the Third (1249—1286) was one hundred and twenty marks, and the eels taken in the stanks and waters of Fyvie were evidently matter of account in the king's exchequer.

King Edward the First of England made the "chastel of Fyvin" a halting-place in his hasty ride through Aberdeenshire in 1296, as Reginald le Cheyne, Great Chamberlain of Scotland from 1267 to 1269, whose name we find in the Ragman Roll, was then in possession, and had vowed allegiance to him. The room in which tradition says the king slept is still shown in the basement of the oldest part of the castle, the Preston Tower.

King Robert the Bruce, in a briev dated 1325, fixes the marches between "the king's park of Fyvyne and our burghs of Fyvyne and the lands and peat moss of Ardlogy, belonging to the abbey of Arbroath." In the park, on the crest of a hill, is the spot still

¹ A thanage consisted of two parts, demesne, and that given off as freeholds or tenandries. The demesne was held by the thane of the king in feu-farm, and cultivated by the servile class, the bondmen and native men; and the tenandries were either held of him in fee and heritage by the sub-vassals, called freeholders, or occupied by the kindlie tenants of free farmers.

called "the king's seat," where King Robert and his successors held "beds of justice" under the thick shade of the old beech trees. It is a stiff climb up through fern and underwood, but the view thence is beautiful, looking down on the valley of the Ythan, with the ruin of Towie Castle in the distance, and the hills of Foudlan beyond.

David the Second in 1368 granted one-half of his thanage of Fermartyn to William, Earl of Sutherland, for his life, with its tenandries and services of the freeholders, with its bondmen and their bondage services, native men and their followers, to be held in free barony, and his heirs to hold it in ward and relief. The other half was held, as appears by the Chamberlain Rolls, by Thomas Isaak; but it seems to have again fallen to the Crown, as the grandson of Robert the Bruce conferred it upon his son John, then Steward of Scotland, who afterwards ascended the throne as Robert the Third, and is the King Robert of 'The Fair Maid of Perth.' He resigned the estate and castle to his cousin, Sir James de Lindsay, mentioned in history as "Dominus de Crawford et Buchan," whose mother was Egidia, sister of Robert the Second.

Sir James de Lindsay married Margaret Keith, daughter of the Earl Marischal, and in 1395 her nephew, Robert de Keith, attacked the castle; but the Lady de Lindsay defended it gallantly until her husband came to the rescue, and, pursuing the besiegers, defeated them in the parish of Bourtie.

Upon the death of Sir James in 1397, Fyvie came into the possession of his brother-in-law, Sir Henry Preston, a brave knight, who had fought under the Douglas at Otterburn, where he took Sir Ralph Percy prisoner; and from the charters in Fyvie Castle it appears that the barony of Fermartyn was granted to him by the king for the ransom of his prisoner. The old Preston tower was named after this Sir Henry, who died about 1433, leaving two daugh-

ters, co-heiresses, of whom one married a Forbes, taking into that family the property of Tolquhon. The other married a Meldrum, and her descendants held Fyvie for a century and a half, and built the south-west tower of the castle, still called by their name. The adjacent borough of Old Meldrum must have given its name, or taken it, from this family, who were insignificant compared both to their predecessors and their successors. The only man of any note appears to have been Sir George Meldrum, who is mentioned by Lesly as "ane vailyeant and wyse gentleman." He was sent in 1544 as ambassador to Henry the Fifth of England, who was then engaged in laying siege to Boulogne.

In 1596 the Meldrums sold the castle and estate to Alexander Seton, godson of Queen Mary and third son of George, sixth Lord Seton. Alexander had been sent to Rome, and studied in the Jesuits' College for the Church, having received, while still a youth, as "ane godbairne gift" from Mary, the reversion of the Priory of Pluscarden; but the dawn of the Reformation induced him to abandon his ecclesiastical studies, and turn his attention to the law. In 1583 he accompanied his father on an embassy to Henry the Third of France; and on the twenty-seventh of January, 1586, he was admitted an extraordinary lord of session by the style of Prior of Pluscarden. Two years later he was promoted to the position of an ordinary lord, under the title of Lord Urquhart, and five years after that, at the early age of thirty-eight, was elected to the president's chair. Soon afterwards he bought the estate of Fyvie, and henceforward we find him in the 'Sederunt' as "Fyvie Preses."

Exceptionally able and intelligent, Lord Fyvie was a favourite confidant of James the Sixth, who entrusted first his eldest son Prince Henry to his care, and afterwards "Duc Charlis." The latter in 1604 travelled to London with Lord Fyvie, who in that same year was made Lord High Chan-

cellor of Scotland. The following year he was created Earl of Dunfermline, and his correspondence with the king, the Cecils, and all the foremost statesmen of England was uninterrupted; everything that took place in Scotland being minutely and faithfully reported by him. He was named "keeper of the palace, park, and yards of Halyroodhouse" in 1611, and a year later Commissioner to the famous Parliament which rescinded the Acts establishing Presbytery.

The great Chancellor found full scope for his love of building in his new possession of Fyvie, and the Seton Tower proves that his reputation for "greate skill in architecture and herauldie" was not undeserved. There can be no doubt that he engaged the services of one of the French architects who came over to Scotland with Mary of Guise, or with her unfortunate daughter. On the Loire there is the Chateau de Montsabert, which might be built by the same man, so like Fyvie is it.

Billings's description of Fyvie Castle in his 'Antiquities of Scotland' is as follows:—

"Its princely towers, with their luxuriant coronet of coned turrets, sharp gables, tall roofs and chimneys, canopied dormer windows, and rude statuary, present a sky outline at once graceful, rich, and massive, and in these qualities exceeding even the far-famed Glamis. The form of the central tower is peculiar and striking. It consists, in appearance, of two semi-round towers, with a deep curtain between them, retired within a round-arched recess of peculiar height and depth. The minor departments of the building are profusely decorated with mouldings, crockets, canopies, and statuary. The interior is in the same fine keeping with the exterior. The great stair is an architectural triumph such as few Scottish mansions can exhibit; and it is so broad and so gently graduated as to justify a traditional boast, that the laird's horse used to ascend it."

The "two semi-round towers," which are connected by an arch above the fourth story, ending in a gable flanked by two round turrets, are bold and graceful, and built in the purest style of the time. They bear the Seton arms impaled with those of the

wives of Lord Dunfermline on various stones let into the massive walls. The arched doorway, which in former times was the grand entrance, and over which is the "murder hole," whence missiles or molten lead could be poured down upon assailants, is in a deep recess between the twin towers, and forms the centre of the south front of the castle, which now consists of only two sides of a square, each one hundred and fifty feet in length. The remainder of the quadrangle, by far the oldest part, was in a bad state of repair, and General Gordon took it down when in 1777 he erected the Gordon Tower on part of the site of the old chapel. This tower, of immense strength and solidity, forms the northern angle of the west front of the castle. The walls of Fyvie are generally from seven to eleven feet thick, and when I say that one of the towers is seven stories in height from base to battlement, my readers may imagine how imposing the castle is. Inside the doorway of the Seton Tower is one of the curiosities of the place, the ancient iron "yett," or gate, which is thus described in a publication by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland:—

"This elegant gate is arched at the top, and measures nine feet in height by five feet four and a half inches in breadth. It consists of seven perpendicular and twelve horizontal bars, besides the frame. The perpendiculars are much wasted between the lowest horizontal bar and the frame. The bars, like those of Glamis, alter their dimensions in the two divisions of their length; where pierced, they are about one and a half inches square, expanding at the eyes to two and five-eighths inches, but in the penetrating division they are one and a half inches by one inch. In the frame the bars are rather larger. The three hinges are contained in recesses in the wall. The three bolts are squared in the middle, and are the most massive I have met with. They differ in size, the upper one being twenty-five inches in length, and the two lower ones twenty-nine inches, and each has a different maker's mark upon it. The position of the iron gate is quite peculiar, being six feet eight inches behind the outer wooden door of the castle. It is the largest in Scotland save the one at Drumlanrig Castle, in Dumfriesshire."

Considering the enormous mass of the metal, it swings lightly on its hinges, and the heavy bolts that secure it can be drawn with a couple of fingers. It is an exceptional specimen of the "yett" of the old Scottish fortalices described in the 'Monastery,' when the reiving rider of the Clint-hill extricated the imprisoned inmates of Glendearg.

The present entrance faces the east, and is a modern addition; out of it opens the magnificent staircase built by Alexander Seton, Lord Dunfermline, as far as I know, unique in its style. It is twenty-four feet in breadth, and revolves in corkscrew fashion round a massive newel, or pillar. The turns and windings of the ribbed and vaulted roof, the arches springing out of carved capitals in the walls, the coats of arms repeated at every turn, give an impression of strength and lightness quite unrivalled. What gallant lords and ladies have trod those long, low steps since the Chancellor put up the large oaken board near the top of the staircase, to commemorate the finishing of this triumph of architectural skill!—

"Alexander Seton, Lord Fyvie—Dame Gressel Leslie, Lady of Fyvie—1603."

The first four words are alternately separated by crescents and cinquefoils (Seton and Hamilton), and the others by buckles, the bearings of the Leslie family.

At the top of the great staircase is a tiny room, panelled in dark oak, whose floor is stained with indelible traces of blood. You may scrub, scrape, or plane; those ghastly spots can never be erased. Whether they are connected with the famous Green Ladye I know not. She only shows herself to members of the family on the winding staircase. Green is considered a colour of bad omen in the Highlands—I suppose because the fairies are fond of it; and it is fatal to various families, among others to the "gallant Grahams."

The Chancellor was thrice married;

first to Lilius Drummond, whose name is carved deeply into the outer sill of a bedroom window on the second floor, looking into the courtyard of the castle. Tradition says that she met with a violent death there by order of her husband; but, as a matter of fact, Dame Lilius died at Dalgety in Fife, in May, 1601. Gressel Leslie was the second, and the Honourable Margaret Hay the third wife, by whom Lord Dunfermline had a son, Charles, the second earl.

The great Chancellor died after an illness of fourteen days at Pinkie, on the sixteenth of June, 1622, in the sixty-seventh year of his age, "with the regret of all that knew him and the love of his country." He was buried at Dalgety, between his first two wives.

Charles, Lord Dunfermline, took an active part in public affairs during the reigns of Charles the First and Second. After the execution of the former he went to Holland, to wait on Charles the Second, with whom he returned to Scotland. He was sworn a privy councillor in 1660, and nine years later was appointed an extraordinary lord of session. By his wife, Lady Mary Douglas, he had three sons; the eldest, Lord Fyvie, was killed in a sea fight against Holland, just before the death of his father in 1672, when Alexander, the second son, became Earl of Dunfermline, but died two years afterwards at Edinburgh.

There exists at Fyvie Castle a charter granting to this, the third earl, the privilege of keeping a weekly market and three annual fairs on the lands of the manor place of Fyvie. Two of these are still held, on Shrove Tuesday and on the first Tuesday of July. It also grants power to nominate and choose baillies and magistrates for the government of "the burgh of barony of Fyvie," and "to possess and use ane mercat cross," and to have and make a "tolbuith," and to "call, accuse, and execute justice on all committers of murder, theft and other crimes." Alexander was suc-

ceeded by his youngest brother James, who, after having served under the Prince of Orange as a young man, commanded a troop of horse under Dundee at Killiecrankie. Outlawed, and his estates forfeited by Parliament in 1690, Lord Dunfermline died at St. Germain's four years later, aged fifty, leaving no children by his wife Lady Jean, third daughter of Lewis, Marquis of Huntly, and sister of the first Duke of Gordon.

While Fyvie was in the possession of the Setons, it was occupied for several days by Montrose, when retreating before the superior forces of Argyle in 1644. On the brow of the hill, where is the king's seat before mentioned, one can distinctly trace the entrenchments of the camp of the great marquis; and here balls and pieces of armour are frequently found. Patrick Gordon, in 'Britanes Distemper,' describes the site most graphically:—

"Haueing made a generall moustier, hee raises his campe after the sunne was set, and marches from Huntly to Auchterlesse, and from thence to Fyvie. Thus he did both to save the lands of Huntly, which was his surest retreat from the ravaige of a destroying enemy, as also because the country there was weil provided of victuall for his armie; and if his armie should intend ane surpyee, or force him to fight, the ground was more advantageous for the defendand than the assailzeant, haueing the river Ithen on his right hand, a woode on his left, and a deepe hollow bruike that ran befor him, which serued as a ditch or trinch to brake the furre of an vnited charge of horsemen."

Montrose was so ill supplied with ammunition as to be obliged to melt down into bullets every pewter dish, flagon, and vessel in and about Fyvie, which caused one of the Royalists to exclaim, when a Covenanter fell, "There goes another traitor's face spoiled by a pewter pot."

Hardly could the good people of Fyvie have had time to make good the loss of their pewter pots and dishes, when the castle was again fortified, in 1646, by the Earl of Aboyne, who left a strong garrison in it under "Captane Jhone Gordonne," by whom the Cove-

nanters were defeated on two occasions, with the loss of all their baggage, horses, arms, "stuf and prouision."

The estate was purchased from the Crown by William, second Earl of Aberdeen, in 1726, and settled on the children of his third wife Anne, youngest daughter of the second Duke of Gordon. The "Cock of the North," as her brother, Lord Lewis, was called, and who is the hero of the well-known ballad beginning,

"Oh, send Lewie Gordon hame,
And the lad I daurna name,"

was a frequent visitor at Fyvie, and some of his letters are dated thence. In Scotch song the Gordons are frequently mentioned, and the litheness, which is still a characteristic of the family, is often alluded to:—

"He turned him round sae lichtly,
As do the Gordon's a'."

The "gay Gordons," the "gentle Gordons," the "stately Gordons," and, in less flattering guise, "the fause Gordons," figure in many an old ballad. Lady Jean, daughter of the Earl of Kintore, who married Forbes, laird of Monymusk, to the inquiry of—

"How dee ye like Pitfichie?"

answers:—

"Oh, I had wine an' wa'nuts,
An' servants aye at my call,
An' the bonny Laird of Fyvie
To see me at Keithhall."

When the Duke of Cumberland marched through the Den of Rothie, part of the estate of Fyvie, on his way north, just before the battle of Culloden, the Countess of Aberdeen, then a widow, took her eldest son to see the passage of the army. As one looks at her portrait in the dining-room at the castle, refined, fair and pretty, aristocratic and essentially *grande dame*, sitting in a blue silk robe, with a dainty hand on her child's shoulder, one can realise the answer she made to the duke on his asking her name: "I am the sister of Lewie Gordon," said she, drawing herself up

to her full height. The duke bowed low, and answered, "I hope your boy may become as strong and valued a supporter of the House of Hanover as your brother is of the House of Stuart."

The road followed by the duke can yet be traced through the woods of the Den, which extend from the Lewes of Fyvie southward for several miles, and is as beautiful a stretch of sylvan scenery as can be found anywhere. Roedeer are often seen, and the steep hill sides, carpeted with purple heather, ferns, and the dark glossy green leaves of the bilberry, glisten in the sun's rays which glint through, lighting up the red brown stems of the noble Scotch firs, or quivering on the silver trunks of the birch and the shimmering leaves of the aspen. The purling brook of Rothie rushes down the Den, giving itself the airs of quite a large stream, now forming miniature cascades, then dawdling under a rowan-tree, making a deep brown pool, as though to reflect the wealth of scarlet berries, and to harbour

"The silly fish, which (worldling like) still look

Upon the bait, but never on the hook."

A solemn heron stands watching for his prey on a jutting crag, but flaps slowly up into the air with his long legs stretching behind him, as our shelties pick their way down the steep hill side, startling a hare from her form and disturbing a pair of kingfishers, who dart up stream, looking like large turquoises or topazes suddenly endowed with life.

The boy who watched the army defile past fulfilled the wish of the duke by becoming a general and an aide-de-camp and groom of the bed-chamber to George the Third. General Gordon was member for Woodstock in 1768, and for Heytesbury six years later. He, like former lairds of Fyvie, left his name indelibly connected with the castle by building the Gordon Tower; he also planted extensively on

the estate, and made the beautiful lake, reclaiming all the boggy land and turning it into fine meadows.

The Scotch shepherds have always had a reputation for "wut," and Donald, who had a large flock of sheep under his care in the park of Fyvie, proved no exception. Our conversation used to be brief, as I could not understand half he said, and he fully returned the compliment. I was fascinated by the sagacity and the lovely eyes of his colley dog, and tried hard to wile his love away from the harsh-voiced Donald, who resented my "spoiling the wee bit doggie." One day, passing through the park on a very windy day, I said to the shepherd, "How silly of your sheep to go on the top of the hill there. Why don't they keep down by the Ythan? I should, if I were a sheep." Donald looked at me with profound contempt. "Eeh, leddy, if ye were a ship ye'd hae some sense," was his answer.

The fine library in the castle owes its existence to William, the only son of General the Hon. William Gordon, who died in 1816. It would have delighted the recluse of Monkbarns, with its portraits of the House of Stuart, and the two little side cabinets, crammed with rare old books, situated in the round gate towers, so suggestive of witchcraft and magic. William Gordon was an accomplished man, a great astronomer, and devoted to scientific pursuits; he died unmarried in 1847, when Fyvie went to his cousin Charles, the eldest son of Lord Aberdeen's third son, Alexander, better known as Lord Rockville, one of the lights of the Scotch bar. Singularly agreeable and well informed, and one of the handsomest men of his day, Lord Rockville won the heart of the young widow of the Earl of Dumfries and Stair, about whose beauty there was a popular rhyme—

"The girls of Ayr are all but stuff
Compared with beauteous Annie Duff."

She was the daughter of Mr. Duff, of Crombie, and of Elizabeth Dalrymple,

one of the wittiest and cleverest women of her time. Mr. Duff would not allow his daughters to learn to write, as he said it was of no use to women, save to write love-letters; Anne learnt, however, in secret, from the old butler. Dean Ramsay tells an anecdote about Lord Rockville which is eminently characteristic of the manners and habits of those days. Appearing one evening late at a convivial club with a rueful expression of countenance, and being asked what was the matter, the great lawyer exclaimed solemnly, "Gentlemen, I have met with the most extraordinary adventure that ever occurred to a human being; as I was walking along the Grassmarket, all of a sudden the street rose up and struck me on the face."

Poor man, the street was destined to be his worst enemy, for in 1792 he slipped, one frosty night, close to his own door in Queen Street, and broke his arm, which was set, and he was supposed to be doing well, when concussion of the brain came on, and in three days he was dead, leaving four sons and four daughters. The eldest son, Charles, only possessed Fyvie for four years, and on his death in 1851 his son, Colonel William Cosmo Gordon, came into the property, who, dying without children, was succeeded in 1879 by his brother, Captain Alexander Henry Gordon. He died in 1884 without issue, when Fyvie reverted to the grandson of Lord Rockville's second son, Sir William Duff Gordon, whose maternal uncle, Sir James Duff, left him the baronetcy on condition of coupling the name of Duff with that of Gordon. Sir Maurice Duff Gordon, the present laird of Fyvie, is the only son of Sir Alexander Cornwall Duff Gordon by Lucie Austin, only child of the great lawyer, John Austin, and of his wife, Sarah Taylor, a beautiful and accomplished woman. Lady Duff Gordon's 'Letters from Egypt' are well known, and her death at the early age of forty-six, at Cairo, was mourned by all who knew her.

Such an unbroken series of charters as that preserved at Fyvie Castle must be very rare; and the charter chamber, all panelled in old quaintly carved oak, showing the monogram of Chancellor Dunfermline in two places, and the arms of the Gordons on the vaulted stone ceiling, is a most attractive room. It is on the first floor of the Meldrum Tower, just above the secret chamber, and the huge fire-proof cupboard or safe, with a door like the plate of an ironclad, goes deep into the wall and opens into two large recesses; in the ceiling of the right-hand one I saw what appears to be the remains of steps broken away. This I believe to have been the ancient mode of access to the famous secret room, which superstition has hitherto shielded from inquisitive eyes. There is no doubt about the exact locality; and it probably either consists of two stories, or goes deep into the foundations and beyond the actual walls, as the sward outside is of a different colour, and the ground sounds hollow under the foot for some distance beyond the base of the tower, particularly on the south side.

Tradition says that much treasure lies buried there, but that the first person who enters forfeits his life as the price of his temerity. Another version asserts that the wife of the laird will go blind when the first ray of light penetrates the darkness that has reigned for many hundreds of years inside those massive walls. The popular belief is that the "black vomit," or plague, is shut up in the dungeon, and I do not think a Fyvie man would willingly use a crowbar or a chisel to solve the mystery. Matter-of-fact people suggest that it may have been in communication with an underground passage to the Ythan, as a means of exit from the castle in times of danger, or that it was really only a prison. The immense depth of wall in which, as before said, the fireproof safe in the charter-room is situated, exists also on the second floor, where the Gordon room and

dressing-room are; the latter is immediately above the charter chamber, and the passage between it and the bedroom is about eight or ten feet long, and sounds quite hollow behind the panelling on the western side. The same thing is repeated on the story above, where the panel-room, a most ghostly abode, and its dressing-room, have the same space between them, which would be more than sufficient for a secret staircase to the basement; in the panel-room tradition says that there exists a sliding panel which leads to a secret passage. The dressing-room to the Gordon room has a bad name for queer noises, and nervous people have ere now assured me that they felt a hand at dead of night pressing their pillow, or heard stifled shrieks and swift footsteps in the distance. I myself have never heard anything more ghostly than the vanes on a windy night, which sadly wanted oiling.

With regard to the "weeping stone," which certainly does get very damp at times and glistens as though with tears, the prophecy of Thomas the Rhymer runs as follows:—

"Fyvy's riggs and towers,
Hapless shall ye mesdames be,
When ye shall hae within your methes,¹
Frae harryit kirks lands, stanes three;
Ane in the oldest tower
Ane in my ladie's bower
And ane below the water-yett,
And it ye shall never get."

It is supposed to refer to some curse on the Fyvie estate, which originally belonged in great measure to the Church; in which case the "weeping stone," which looks like a lump of dirty rock-salt, might be a fragment of some boundary-mark off ravished Church property.

It is a curious coincidence that no heir has been born in the castle for more than five hundred years, though Fyvie has been transmitted through three families for many generations.

One of the red sandstone figures on

¹ "Methes," stones or lines, indicating a boundary.

the top of a turret of the Preston Tower represents the well-known "Andrew Lammie, the trumpeter of Fyvie," who still points his trumpet towards the Mill-o'-Tifty, where his love, "bonnie Annie," lived. The pathetic and popular ballad of "Andrew Lammie" will be found in every collection of Scotch poetry; it used, in former times, to be represented in a dramatic form at rustic meetings in Aberdeenshire. The grave of Tifty's Annie is in "the green kirkyard of Fyvie," with the date, nineteenth of January, 1673. Part of the original Mill-o'-Tifty is still standing

"in Tifty's den

Where the burn runs clear and bonnie,"

by the side of a more modern structure. The drive or ride there, through the woods of Fyvie, where Andrew Lammie

"Had had the art to gain the heart
Of Tifty's bonnie Annie,"

is very lovely.

In Fyvie churchyard there is also the tombstone of the Gordons of Gight, the last of whom, Catherine, a descendant of Sir William Gordon, third son of the Earl of Huntly, by the daughter of James the Second, married in 1785 the Honourable John Byron, and was the mother of the great poet. Lord Byron never possessed the estate, which was sold to the Earl of Aberdeen two years after the marriage of his mother, to pay Mr. Byron's debts.

The castle and estate of Gight became the property, about 1479, of William Gordon, third son of the Earl of Huntly, who was killed at Flodden in 1513. In 1644 the castle of Gight was taken by the Covenanters, and garrisoned by them. The place was plundered, the furniture removed or destroyed, and the interior of the house, even to the wainscoting, torn to pieces. It was, however, restored and inhabited.

Thomas the Rhymer has various rhymes and prophecies about Gight, one of which was fulfilled on the

marriage of the heiress, Catherine, with Mr. Byron :—

“ When the heron leaves the tree,
The Laird o’ Gight shall landless be,”

for all the denizens of a heronry, who lived in the branches of a magnificent tree near the castle, left their abode, and migrated to the woods of Kelly (Haddo House), where a tribe of them are now domiciled.

In 1791, Lord Haddo, eldest son of the Earl of Aberdeen, was killed on the “ green o’ Gight ” by a fall from his horse, when the castle was abandoned to ruin. Some years after this a servant met a similar death on the Mains, or home farm; and a few years since, part of the house being pulled down, preparatory to the home farm being turned into “ lea,” a wall fell and crushed a workman to death, thus accomplishing another saying of Thomas the Rhymers :—

“ At Gight three men a violent death shall dee,
An’ after that the land shall lie in lea.”

The Ythan flows through the braes of Gight, and just under the ruined castle, at the bottom of a steep precipitous ravine, forms a pool, the “ Hagberry Pot,” believed to be of unfathomable depth, where tradition says still lies the huge iron chest, containing all the family plate, sunk there in 1644.

The whole of the braes of Gight are most beautiful, and within an easy drive of Fyvie, towards the east; on the way one passes over the well-named “ Windy Hills ” and through the hamlet of Woodhead, which contains a memorial of better days in its market cross, rebuilt on the site of an old one, which, with the tolbooth and gallows, marked the place as the burghs of barony of the Gordons of Gight.

The ecclesiastical history of Fyvie can be traced back for more than seven hundred years; outside the south lodge of Fyvie park, in the centre of a field, stands a cross, marking the site of the priory of St. Mary’s,

founded 1179. This priory, and the religious houses of Fyvie and Ardlogie, were connected with the Abbey of Arbroath (or Aberbrothoc), which was founded and endowed by William the Lion, King of Scotland, in 1178, and dedicated to his friend Thomas à Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury.

In 1323 a certain Albertinus was appointed to “ the care of keeping of the house of Fyvin ; ” I cannot refrain from quoting the letter written to him by his spiritual superior, the Abbot of Arbroath :—

“ Brother Bernard, by Divine permission, Abbot of Aberbrothoc, sends greeting with paternal blessing to his brother, Lord Albertinus, keeper of the house of Fyvin. In order that the maintenance of regular discipline under you and among your fellows may not be relaxed or done away with, we enjoin and command you, in virtue of your holy obedience, that on three days of each week—Monday, Wednesday, and Friday—you shall regularly hold a chapter within the chancel of your chapel, and rebuke and correct all the excesses of the fellows; that you shall see to the due performance of public worship on the Lord’s Day and on Feast Days; that you will cause regular fastings to be observed, unless where bodily weakness renders this undesirable; and if any of the young men have been drunken, clamorous, obstreperous, or disobedient and rebellious to you, you shall try first by a word of kindly admonition to influence them; if this is ineffectual, then you shall subject them to a course of silence, and a spare diet of bread and water, and in a secret place remote from the hearing of the seculars shall cause them to be thoroughly flogged; and if this fails of the desired effect then you shall send them, with a note of their offence, to our aforesaid abbey, there to be dealt with.

“ Given at Aberbrothoc on Martinmas Monday, 1325.”

In the chartulary of Arbroath there are various notices regarding successive priors of Fyvie, and in the Rolls of the Scottish Parliament there is frequent mention of them. The old Catholic names are still borne by several of the springs of water in Fyvie parish, among them St. Peter’s well, not far from the church of the same name; St. John’s well, near a cairn, called Cairnchedley (a corruption of the Gaelic *carn-che-le*, signifying a monumental cairn where the

worship of the Deity was held), now much reduced in size, as most of the cottages near have been built out of it; and St. Mary's well.

There have been found also in the parish of Fyvie three curious stones, two of which are figured in Dr. J. Stuart's fine work on 'The Sculptured Stones of Scotland.' On the one built into the wall of the schoolhouse is rudely but unmistakably traced an elephant, with the symbol of a mirror in front, and above the sceptre and crescent. The second stone, now in the garden of Rothie Brisbane, is merely a fragment, bearing apparently the mirror with three discs and a figure, in shape like an arch, called the horseshoe ornament. There is a third stone built into the wall of Fyvie Church, with the rough figure of an eagle upon it, and either a mirror above or a portion of what is called the spectacle ornament.

Dr. Stuart says:—

"In all these symbolical monuments there appears a mixture of real representation and mere ornament, generally of a grotesque character. . . . With regard to the symbols on the Scotch monuments, it will be remarked that the figure of the elephant is found both on the rude pillar-stones and the cross-slabs

in all parts of the country, from Fife to Caithness. . . . We learn from Polyænus, a writer of the second century, that Cesar, attempting to pass a large river in Britain, was resisted by Cassolanus, King of the Britons, with many horsemen and chariots. Cesar had in his train a very large elephant, an animal hitherto unseen by the Britons. Having armed him with scales of iron, and put a large tower upon him, and placed therein archers and slingers, he ordered them to enter the stream, on which the Britons in consternation fled with their horses and chariots. Our ignorance of the amount of intercourse between people of different countries in early times hinders us from tracing the source from which the idea of an elephant might naturally have been introduced into Pictland."

In the yard of the home farm is a relic of the old *corrées*, in the shape of a peat-gauge. The tenants were bound to deliver a certain quantity of turf, which was measured by stacking the peats against an arched wall of stone, and then checking off the cubic contents of the cartloads by measuring from the wall along the stack.

The legends and superstitions in which Fyvie is so rich do not disturb the slumber of its inmates, and the odd mixture of modern luxury and grim antiquity make it a most romantic place.

JANET ROSS.

HENRY BRADSHAW.

THOSE who through the pitiless east winds of that grey February day, staggered sadly away from the shadow of the great chapel where they had laid all that was mortal of their friend, must have found it hard to believe that the familiar figure would never again be seen pacing down that very walk. Day by day it used to pass close along the huge front of the Fellows' buildings, with steps short but never hurried, the broad shoulders swaying almost imperceptibly yet unmistakably, the great head set back, and the kindly humorous eye glancing over the great buttresses that fronted him, as he clasped the well-worn note-book to his side. And they felt the blank still more, because it was just on such occasions as that which they had been attending that he knew how to render sympathy and comfort as no one else alive. They could some of them remember how in such moments of unutterable regret he would come close to them with no easy words of healing for a grief that words could not touch, but with love and mute inquiry and sadness in his eyes, would in tender demonstration take and retain a hand—and nothing more—only saying perhaps, "I understand;" and so pass on, knowing that by showing human fellowship, by suffering with you—for he made no pretence to suffer—he had done far more than if he had pointed you to a help of which you knew already, and to a strength to which you could not yet aspire.

And thus it was that the grey-headed contemporaries of his undergraduate days wept at that vault with men young enough to have been his sons; all feeling that the earth was poorer, not only for all the learning that had descended almost unrecorded into the grave, not because of the

works unfinished that no one else could dare to do, but because they had lost so much love, and not love of an ordinary kind. He loved both well and wisely; of the words and events of intercourse with him you never wished a single thing done or said otherwise. He was one of those on whom had fallen the true priestly nature. It came so naturally to him to bear others' burdens that it at last became natural for others to lay them on him. He knew that repentant recital of failures to one whom you revere is in itself a potent absolution; and he had the true priest's tact; he did not want to set right, to give advice, but to hear what you had to say. How it was said was nearly as important to him as what was said. The more detailed was the difficulty or the struggle or the misadventure, the better he was pleased. "Go on," he would say, if the inquirer feared he wearied him, "tell me everything you can; it is so *interesting*." In that word lay the secret of his influence over the young men who talked so naturally to him of all their doings—the young men that so many complain it is so hard to influence. The fact is, they do not want merely sympathy; *that* they can get, and more than they want, in their home circle—where it is apt to be (they think) unintelligent sympathy, which floods but does not fill. No! what they want is to feel that their trials are *interesting*. It is the season of egotism; they are supremely interested in themselves—self-conscious; any one who finds them interesting, too, will influence them.

No one is ever widely loved who has not mannerisms; those little ways and methods that stir such smiling affection that are so eagerly consulted during life, and that wring the heart

with pathos and brim the eyes to recall when all is over. Who that knew them well will ever forget those broad high rooms? They were on the first floor, by the hall, looking into the college court in front, with all its trim stillness, broken only at times by the drip of the falling fountain. The windows that looked that way were always bright with flowers—geranium and lobelia, as I remember them.

The room behind looked across a little grassy court, on the huddled high-roofed buildings, almost Flemish in outline, of St. Catharine's on the left, with the huge glossy walnut in the inner court; straight in front it commanded Queen's Lane from end to end, and on the right there rose the battlemented brick towers and the quaint oaken *flèche* of the latter college, seen over apple-trees and orchard walls; and the whole view rounded off by the high garden-elsms across the river. In the window-boxes in that room—for many years his favourite sitting-room—grew stubbly smoke-dried evergreens, cypress and *lignum vitæ*; on the left, as you entered, stood a huge serviceable deal press with innumerable drawers, on one side of which were pinned notices and invitations; to the left of the room, books, the larger at the top, passing over the door and embedding it; a family picture or two and some dusty oil-paintings; in one corner an untenanted frame, with the glass in it, showing the wall-paper through, which he would neither take down nor get refilled. A large telescope on a stand by one of the windows, and a broad table, with its rough red cloth strewn with books and papers in orderly confusion, at which his visitor would find him sitting, with his back to the fire, writing in that broad, blunt, readable hand, or handling affectionately some yellow manuscript or brown-clasped quarto. "How nice of you," he would say as you entered and stepped on to the square-bordered carpet laid on the bare-boarded floor. "I suppose you mean that I ought to get it stained,"

he would add with a smile, interpreting a hardly momentary glance that you gave as you crossed the threshold.

In the outer room, rarely used except in the summer, were many books and a few pictures—an original sketch by Thackeray, a bold pen-and-ink drawing of the view from the back window of his rooms, six postcards illustrated and sent him by some artistic friend on a tour; a grand piano, on which I never heard him or any one but Dr. Stanford presume to play. In this room used to be the delightful Sunday evening assemblies, to which friends used to drop in uninvited for tea and talk, and he used to sit caressing the hand of some more favoured intimate and dropping those wonderfully humorous sentences—sometimes caustic, had it not been for the glance with which they were accompanied; shooting through with little shafts of criticism any affectation or prejudice, any little idiosyncrasy and personal peculiarity that displayed itself in those round him, and laughing every now and then with that delightful intimate laugh that irradiated his face. "Oh, I forgot," he would say (after mentioning the name of some other undergraduate) to the young friend sitting by him, reputed to be exclusive in his social estimate, "not b.s.," (best set); or by a little gesture with his finger, he would indicate the *narus aduncus*. Or, on the entrance of another, he would playfully hide a little gold charm which he wore on his watch chain, because the new-comer was supposed to have an aversion to it, and if the delinquent pleaded that such an aversion had never been hinted or expressed, "Oh, I like you to dislike it," he would say, "it's so characteristic."

And one special gift he had, which is so rare—he could rebuke and yet not give offence, for he was never instant out of season. He could with a little barbed speech run right to the heart of some weakness, probe some secret fault that, unconsciously to its

possessor, was betraying itself to others; stab a pretence or an arrogance through and through at the right moment, and yet never make you dislike him. The critic, as a rule, the censor, is obeyed and hated. You recognise that you are the better for the stroke, but you hate the hand that directed it. But with Henry Bradshaw it was never so; you could not feel personal resentment, though the little wound rankled long. Even those whom he emphatically did not like, with whom he was most unsparing of criticism and quiet derision, did not resent it; they were uneasy under it, but anxious for his good opinion, anxious to redeem themselves in his eyes.

The conversation with him, as I remember it, was never sustained or argumentative. He did not care to sift the problems of life and being, or to hear them sifted before him. That was not the way in which life presented itself to him; he was hereditarily endowed with much of the Quietist instinct. He had not (on the surface, at least) questionings of heart and searchings of spirit; he was what can be called a life-philosopher—that is to say, he was not even deducing a system from faith or experience like some restless spirits, and modifying it from day to day; he was simply acting, when it became him to act, in the way that his pure high instincts led him, and growing wiser so. And thus voluble and flashy talkers, keen disputative absorbed spirits, conversational dogmatists, found little to satisfy them in him. They were even apt to despise him in his greatness; and he, too, was uneasy in such society; he sported his door against them; he gave them no encouragement, unless, indeed, he had been their father's friend—then everything was forgiven.

In his bedroom, which latterly became his sitting-room, he kept all the Irish pamphlets which he and his father had amassed;—his father was an Irishman. It was a very characteristic room. The walls were covered to the top with bookcases, painted

white, and gradually sloping away inwards as they descended, so that he could have the larger books at the top and the smaller at the bottom. These were filled with grey and white and blue paper volumes, many unbound and dusty, tied up in masses with strings and tapes of all colours; in one corner an immense heap standing high up on the floor. "I know they oughtn't to be here; they ought to be in the library," he would say; "but of course that has never been done."

It was in this room, so he told us, that he used to be so ceaselessly annoyed by a mouse, which began to perambulate about two A.M. night after night for many weeks. Night after night he would resolve, he said, to "humour it no longer;" but night after night he would at last get up and open the door for it to go into his other room, which it instantly did, returning by some secret way to renew its wanderings the next night. "There never was such a pampered mouse," he used to say.

And the rooms all through were filled with memorials, of which he would sometimes give you the history, from the little pictures and ornaments on the ledges and chimney-pieces to the incongruous-looking tea-set that he used, and that formed so integral a part of the picture in quiet talks with him—every single piece of which was a memory of some one. In former times he had a little toy, a model of the old Eton long-chamber bedsteads, that stood on his table. One evening a fantastic, wild friend, that had been at Eton with him, coming in to sit with him—a man who had been miserable, hounded and persecuted through the whole of his school-life there—stung by a sudden thought, perhaps some barbarous association, seized this with the tongs and crushed it into the fire. The owner sat immovable till the holocaust was over, and then said gently, "Was that necessary?"

Nothing was more remarkable than the kind of men you met in his rooms.

Any one engaged in arduous literary work of a kind involving special research you were sure to see there sooner or later; many of the rising men in the university, who knew greatness when they saw it; and not only these, but scapegraces, to whom he accorded an almost fatherly protection, "outsiders," so called, whom for some venial social defect, some ungraciousness of manner or want of refining influences, society in general had rigorously excluded, these were to be found expanding in his presence. And the strangest thing about these intimacies was a point to which many will bear testimony,—that if they grew at all, they grew to include all the home circle of which you were a part;—"all my brothers and sisters," said one who was his friend, "unknown to him before—he came to realise and love them all for themselves."

He was a wonderful instance of a man, unmethodical and dreamy by nature, made businesslike by consideration for other people. His library-work was always exactly done; his own work suffered by the rigorous self-sacrifice with which he devoted his time to the details of business. Invitations and other social requirements did not come off so well. He was known frequently to neglect these. "I hardly ever go out," he used to say. It was not for want of being asked; and it so soon got to be understood that such was his habit, and he was so welcome when he did come, though he had not announced his intention of so doing, that the delinquencies were accepted in the spirit in which they had been committed. Indeed, so great was his dislike of being forced to a decision, that it is related of him that a friend who had written to ask him to dinner, on receiving no answer, sent him two post-cards, with "Yes" written on one and "No" on the other, and by return of post received them both again.

When one speaks of his "work," it is hard to make ordinary people quite understand either its extent, its im-

portance, or its perfection. He knew more about printed books than any man living; he could tell at a glance the date and country, generally the town at which a book was published. And the enormous range of this subject cannot be explained without a technical knowledge of the same. He was one of the foremost Chaucer scholars; a very efficient linguist in range (though for reading, not speaking purposes), as, for instance, in the case of the old Breton language, which he evolved from notes and glosses scribbled between the lines and on margins of mass-books; and his joy at the discovery of a word that he had suspected but never encountered was wonderful to see. He could acquire a language for practical purposes with great rapidity; Armenian, for instance, which he began on a Thursday morning at Venice, and could read so as to decipher titles for the purpose of cataloguing on Saturday night. He had a close and unrivalled knowledge of cathedral statutes and constitutions. He was an advanced student in the origin of liturgies, especially Irish, and indeed in the whole of Irish literature and printing he was supreme; and finally, he was by common consent the best paleographer, or critic of the date of manuscripts, in the world.

The story of his adventure in the Parisian Library is worth recording here. A book had been lost for nearly a century; he went over to see if he could discover it. Search was fruitless, though there was a strong presumption as to the part of the library where it would be found. He stood in one of the classes describing its probable appearance to the librarian, and to illustrate it said, "About the height, thickness, and of similar binding to this," taking a book out of the shelves as he did so. It was the missing volume.

So, too, he would refer Oxford men by memory to the case and shelf of the Bodleian where they would find the book for which they had looked in

vain. And most characteristic of him was the explanation which he once gave me of his enormous knowledge. "You know," he said, "I have never worked at anything for myself, except perhaps at Chaucer, all my life long; all the things that I do know I have stumbled across in investigating questions for other people." How much of this knowledge was merely held in solution in that amazing brain, how much was committed to paper, I do not know; of the latter I fear very little. He had a long series of miscellaneous note-books, but most of them so technical as to be unintelligible except to one as far advanced in such knowledge as himself. His published works are but a few pamphlets.

The way in which all this work was done, all this knowledge was accumulated, was, among the other peculiarities of his genius, the most amazing. No man ever seemed to have more leisure. He would talk with perfect readiness, not only on any special matters that you wished to consult him on, but trivial, leisurely gossip, and never show impatience to continue his work, or the least desire to return to it. The secret was that he never left off. Except for rare holidays, visits to relations, or foreign tours, he never left Cambridge for years. His hours were most perplexing. He would generally work very late at night, sometimes till four or five in the morning, if there was much work on hand; go to the library about eleven, return for lunch, then back to the library again, with perhaps a visit to a Board or Syndicate till tea-time, for he took no exercise except spasmodically; then he would go into hall or not as the fancy took him, on the majority of days not doing so, and eating nothing but tea and bread and butter in his rooms; and then from eight o'clock he would sit there, working if uninterrupted, but with his doors generally open to welcome all intruders—ceaselessly, patiently acquiring, amassing, disintegrating the enormous mass of

delicate and subtle information which not only did he never forget, but all of which he seemed to carry on the surface, and carry so lightly and easily too, for he did not appear to be erudite; he never played the part of the learned man, though with acquirements as ponderous, as detailed, and to the generality of people as uninteresting, as the real or the fictitious Casaubon.

Yet this knowledge was not only of things that lay inside his own subjects, but extended to all kinds of paths that could never have been suspected. I have never met a person so nearly omniscient. If you wanted to hear private and personal details about a man with whom you became connected in a business or official capacity, he could give them. He knew the man, or the family, or the place he lived in. I once travelled up to London with him, and pointed out a great house that was gradually getting absorbed into the creeping metropolis, but which still preserved its country characteristics stately and smoke-dried. "Yes," he said, "it used to be much fresher. I used often to go there when I was a boy: it belonged to the ——" and there came out a little string of old-world anecdotes and tales. Presently we passed a church (near Barnet) with an ivied tower, which had been hopelessly engulfed in the town. This I also showed him. "Yes," he said, "I was christened there." The story is almost too well known to require repetition of Mommsen, who said, after half an hour's conversation with him on some particular point of history, "If I had had a short-hand writer with me, I could have got in half an hour's talk enough materials to have made an interesting volume." And this fabric had been ceaselessly growing and expanding, fitting itself into order, and connecting itself together, ever since the early days, when in the school-yard at Eton a boy who was possessed of some curious volumes, saw Henry Bradshaw issue out of college carrying two antique folios under his arm,

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stealing off to some secret haunt to study them, and greeted him with "Hullo, Bradshaw, whose books have you got there?" The only answer, delivered, without a sign of confusion, in the tones which even then were more expressive in their imperturbability than most men's, was "Yours." It was the same man who received the celebrated forger of manuscripts when he paid his visit to Cambridge carrying with him, among some genuine parchments, his own forgeries, which Coxe only detected by the smell. These Henry Bradshaw turned quietly over, referring them one by one to their respective eras—"end of the thirteenth century, early fourteenth century, latter half of the nineteenth century," as he came to the interpolated false document, without a single reproachful gesture or the slightest inflexion or change of tone. And we may here add the delightful touch with which he dismissed the claims of the same forger to have been the writer of the 'Codex Sinaiticus.' "I am sure, if he had ever seen it, he could never have pretended to have written it," he said.

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And in an instant the whole structure breaks and melts before our eyes: the knowledge gone, God knows whither; the centre of so many quiet activities, of so many dependent lives slipped from its place. The blank is there, however often we say to ourselves that nothing runs to waste; that hoarded experience, gathered painfully in life, and seemingly to be applied only in life, thus vanishing in an instant, is hidden, not gone. As he himself said to a friend after a great trial that he had told him of, which seemed to have in it no wholesome flavour, to be nothing either in prospect or in retrospect, but the very root of bitterness itself: "Everything is the result of something; whether it

is our own fault or not, it means something. What we have to do is to try and interpret it."

And we feel that when such a life, acting as it did so directly on others, and affecting them so visibly, is cut short, there is not a sheer waste of love.

The very shock causes a radiation that no serene possession can give. It seems as if it drew out the love of many natures, crushed it out from all the fibres that were intertwined with his, in a way that even his life did not call it forth. All at once there flows into the gap the love from so many a wounded soul, and we see that such influence cannot die. And though we may be called fanciful, we seem to trace a hopeful analogy in the ease with which he renewed old intimacies, silent for a long interval. He took up the friendship where he had laid it down; there was no adjustment necessary; you became part of his life again at once, because you had never ceased to be so. Such an affection, when it has passed the veil, seems to be waiting for us still; it seems emphatically to have but gone before.

It is said that for some years he had faced the strange visitant; he certainly breathed no word of it to his friends; he would not wreck their peace by any selfish fears; that presence in a life is a swift teacher. In the long night-watches, when you sit alone with your work and *that*, great truths come home, till even the very burden of the thought itself is borne peacefully, nay, even gratefully. At any rate, death seems to have beckoned him away with a strange unwonted gentleness, with wonderful adaptation to the character he called. "It was like him," wrote one who knew and loved him for nearly forty years, "to go so quietly to such great things."

ARTHUR BENSON.

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